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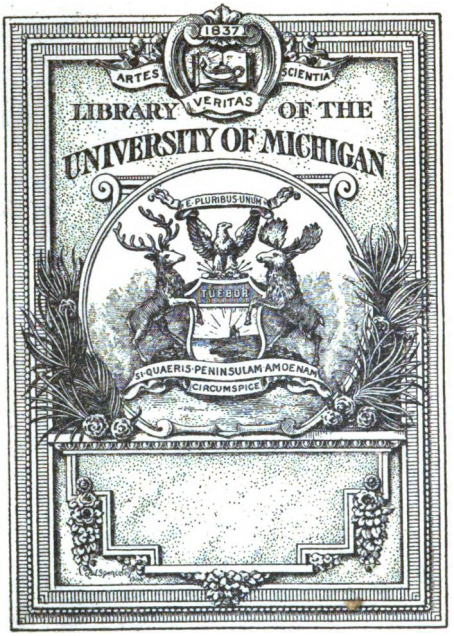

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THE TEMPLE

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OF

MELEKARTHA.

By
Isaac Taylor 1787-1865

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HOLDSWORTH AND BALL.

MDCCCXXXI.

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LONDON:

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THE

Temple of Melekartha.

" He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns and rural works between;
Cities of men, with lofty gates and towers,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone, and bold emprise."

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PREFACE.

Writers of fiction should lay aside the ambition of teaching great lessons of political or private virtue. Such, at least, is the opinion of the writer of these volumes. And yet, in making a profession of this sort, he may perhaps be thought only to expose the fact, that he has himself had to struggle with the presumptuous desire to overstep his proper limits.

Be this as it may, it is true, that if he had seriously proposed to demonstrate more clearly than has yet been done — That superstition and fanatical rancour, and religious discord are mischievous to states, as well as to individuals (and if he had believed himself qualified for so important a

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task) he would have composed — not a romance, but a grave essay, and have supported his position by adducing largely the evidence of real history, which alone carries with it the power to authenticate political doctrines.

Nevertheless, those whose avowed intention is only to amuse, may surely be permitted to win for themselves, if fairly they can, some small portion of that worthy fame and inward satisfaction, which belong not to the mere ministers of pleasure. They may, without blamable presumption, hover over the precincts of great and important principles; and while on the wing, may show, if they have the power to do so, that they would fain instruct, as well as please. Thus they redeem their office in a degree from contempt; and yet are not supposed to harbour the absurd hope of reforming the world—by a tale.

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To depict some of the principal forms of superstitious and fanatical feeling, and to exhibit the natural consequences of such mental disorders, especially as they affect *communities*, was the author's primary design. In fulfilling it he has allowed himself to pursue a devious track; nor has refused to weave upon his story a few extrinsic matters, both descriptive and speculative.

A word of apology should, perhaps, be offered to the reader, who, contrary to the usages of modern novel writing, is asked to undertake so long a journey as into the regions of the most remote antiquity. The author can only say, that it was not until he saw himself separated by the interval of many centuries from all the well-known forms of false religion, that he felt quite free from serious difficulties and disagreeable entanglements, while endeavouring to embody the essential characters of certain

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delusions that infest human nature alike in every age.

In permitting himself an absolute liberty of imagination, while, as a way-faring man, he trod a path that led him through the murky streets of Tyre, beside the river of Babylon, amidst the garden-palaces of Nineveh, and athwart the long desolated empires of the infant world, he has taken care not flagrantly to offend the evidence (so far as it exists) of genuine history: and if he has fabled, yet he hopes that, as he pressed onward through unknown regions, he has not failed to make a due obeisance to Ancient Truth, as often as he found by the road-side a dilapidated monument, consecrated to her honour.

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ERRORS.

VOL. I.—P. 194, line 10, *for* gambled, *read* gamboled.
195, line 6 from the bottom, *for* bands, *read* brands.
285, line 4 from the bottom, *for* moat, *read* mote.

VOL. II.—P. 14, line 5, *for* waste, *read* waist.
62, line 19, *for* flock, *read* folk.

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100, line 17, *read* delusions.

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THE

TEMPLE OF MELEKARTHA.

CHAP. I.

The cool etesian had blown from the rocky heights of Cilicia, and borne us along within sight of the Cyprian groves, until we approached the Clides; when, as the helmsman was preparing to alter the ship's course, the breeze suddenly died away. Our broad sail, which had been stretched obliquely from bow to stern, fluttered and drooped, and the vessel giving its heavy side to the current that sets round the promontory, was carried into the mid-channel, where, ere long, it rested motionless upon the tranquil bosom of the sea.

Our ship, deeply laden with jars of Grecian wine for the market of Memphis, was scarcely to be propelled by the oars of the whole crew.

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The master, rather than exact this toil from his men, determined to wait the chances of wind; he therefore ordered the mast to be lowered, and the main-sail to be stretched over it from side to side of the vessel. By this means we were protected from the scorching beams of the sun, and every one was allowed to give himself to repose.

The master occupied a small platform, covered with a lion's skin, at the stern of the ship. He was a Sidonian—black as night; yet of a countenance altogether unlike that of any other dark-complexioned people, either of Libya or of India. His open and cartilaginous nostril, bushy brow, and firmly closed lips, indicated no mean degree of intelligent energy: he seemed to be one who reluctantly permitted himself to sleep at any time; and never, unless he believed that repose rather than action would promote his interests. This man's attire; his Median trousers, and towering plaited mitre; his jewelled zone, and embroidered corslet; were such as would have been deemed magnificent for a person of much higher condition in Greece. I could not but notice in this Sidonian's dress a mixture of costumes, which indicated that the Phœnicians have at length so far reconciled themselves to the yoke they wear as to affect the modes of their conquerors.

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A slave—I could not ascertain of what nation—stood erect and motionless near the captain's head, whose slumbers it was his duty to guard, while his hawk-eye, the quick movements of which were almost concealed by a heavy lid, observed whatever took place among the crew beneath.

Near to the master, and immediately beneath him, reclined several Greek seamen, lately hired from Ægina. The unconstrained and graceful attitudes of these men declared that their dreams were troubled by none of the alarms which haunt the frighted fancy of a slave. They had stretched their well-rounded limbs at large on the only commodious part of the deck, less, I think, from a direct impulse of selfishness, than from that instinct of superiority which prompts a Greek to take precedence of all other men.

Beside the rowers' benches squatted several Egyptians,* who had charge of the cargo. To deny to this singular people the virtue of industry were manifestly unjust, seeing that they have actually accomplished works more like to the labours of gods than of men. Nevertheless, whoever sees an Egyptian sleeping, will be tempted to say, that nature designed him for

* The alleged aversion of the Egyptians to the sea is disproved by an abundance of evidence.

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nothing but eternal repose. His attitude is almost precisely that of the dog Anubis: he extends his broad palms and closed fingers on his knees; rests his chin on his thumbs; buries the occiput between his shoulders; and, with face supine, seems to glare through his smooth lids at the vacuity of the skies. Nor does he lose, even in sleep, that unvarying simper which nature seems to have imparted to the physiognomy of the most ancient of nations, as if she wished these her eldest sons to express her mockery of Time.

In the lowest part of the hold, and huddled together like eels in the basket of a vender of fish, lay the ship's complement of slaves, whose part it was, whenever necessary, to give their emaciated arms to the most afflictive of all the toils which man exacts from his brother. I could not but compare the sleeping posture of these unhappy beings with that of the Greeks just mentioned:—he who retains though but a single particle of joy that keeps him in friendship with life; or who clings to hope by the slenderest thread, is seen to preserve something of dignity even in his deepest slumbers: but the wretch who lives only to conform himself to the caprices of wanton power, and who dreams ever and again of his chain, and of his smothered revenge, sinks

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down in reckless lassitude upon any spot that will receive his squandered strength; and he sleeps as though he would offer himself a bait to death.

I had taken my seat at the upper end of the rowers' gallery, which impends from the side of the vessel, and whence I could either observe what was taking place on board, or gaze upon the sea:—the sea, now smooth as a mirror, and translucent as the air, offered little obstruction to the curious eye, that would explore the abyss beneath. What might be the depth of water I know not; it was however evidently considerable. Nevertheless, the rays of the noontide sun danced from the spars of the rocky bottom almost with undiminished vividness; and so completely were the sky and sea blended together on the horizon, and so viewless were the waters below, that it was hard not to suppose our vessel to be hung in air midway between earth and heaven. Shoals of brightly coloured fish flashed, from time to time, beneath us, like sheets of summer lightning; while monsters, of enormous size, rushed forwards; or bounding in an instant from the lowest depths to the surface, surprised both the ear and the eye by a sudden surge.

Intent upon the moving scene beneath, I had not perceived the approach of a galley, until the

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grateful and well-remembered melody of the song to which the rowers were keeping time, awakened attention. In pulling up to hail and question us, the gallant vessel turned her painted side, glaring in scarlet, and glittering with gilded carvings, full to the sun. The bright lines of blue and yellow, running from prow to poop, and curling aloft upon both; the three beaks of brass, now dipping, and now weltering from the wave; the fair symbol, fashioned by no mean artist, towering from the bow; the lofty and gorgeous platform at the stern, surmounted by its goose-head, and gay as the fabled bird of the eastern isles, stared upon the sight against the deep azure of the sky; and gained a grace and a lightness from the snowy foam, caused by the sudden backstroke of two hundred oars.

The commander, a handsome Greek, nicely armed and trimly dressed, according to our fashion, stood alone upon the platform, and, by slight movements of the hand, gave necessary directions to his people beneath. The Greeks on board our vessel, startled from their slumbers by the rush of oars, leapt upon their feet, and, without waiting for liberty of speech from the master, commenced a colloquy of mingled railleries and kindly salutations with their countrymen in the galley; and when they had expended their jests,

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acted as interpreters for the master in replying to the questions of the commander of the *Trireme*.

For myself, having learned that the galley was proceeding directly to Tyre, the place of my destination, and glad both to shorten the tediousness of the voyage, and to perform it in more agreeable company than that of the Sidonian, I gained the consent of the captain to take me on board. A lusty stroke from the whole ship's complement of rowers, well managed by the helmsman, brought the vessel again upon her way, and covered the sea with a whiteness, which we left curling round the sides of the bulky merchant vessel, while we darted onwards, like a swallow over the surface of the lake. After a few hours' rowing, we discerned the snowy summits of Lebanon, pink beneath the splendour of a cloudless summer's sky.

The Samian commander, now in the service of the great king, had in early life enriched himself, as many of the Greeks of the islands have done, by the practice of gallant rapine, carried on along every shore from the Myriandrian gulf, to the pillars of Hercules. He was a man of native intelligence; nor untaught in matters of taste: his conversation, fraught with various knowledge, abounded in those specious sallies of wit which serve so well to confound grave distinctions

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between right and wrong. I passed the days of my voyage pleasantly enough in the company of this man, reclined upon a couch that had been placed for my accommodation upon the lofty deck, whence the captain at once gave orders to his men, and swept the sea with the frequent glance of his keen and practised eye.

The setting sun gleamed upon the rugged line of Syrian coast; and we came ashore upon a small island at the mouth of a stream which forms the boundary of the Phœnician territory. The galley was presently hauled upon the sand; an encampment was formed a little higher up, and after a supper, more merry than sumptuous, all stretched themselves carelessly on the ground for the night.

Soon after sunrise the breeze freshened again from the north, and the ship's company, with unbid alacrity, reared the cumbrous mast, and topmast, and spread the whole breadth of purple biblos to the wind; while the helmsman and his helps, minding their duty, obtained a grateful remission of toil for the rowers. We passed Sidon at the market hour of the next day; Sarepta soon afterwards, hardly distinguished from the buildings which run in an almost unbroken line along this coast. As the sun declined we gained sight of the gilded roofs of New Tyre,

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towering high from the sea. We now furled our sail; the benches were manned, and every arm was nerved to its utmost effort, that we might gain the port of Old Tyre* before night. Although the wind had completely died away, a heavy swell raged in the narrow channel which divides the island from the continent. The angry surge broke with vehemence upon the rocks and massy piers of the island city; and once and again an ambitious wave was seen mantling and peering over the stupendous walls, as if it had rolled on from some distant clime to gaze upon the far-famed magnificence of the queen of the sea.

Innumerable vessels of every form, some gorgeously decked like our own, carved, painted, and embossed with gold, silver, and brass, others cumbrous and sombre, filled the outer harbour through which we were passing. Many were making their way through the crowd inward or outward, and even those that were moored to the piles or at anchor, danced at their cables' length upon the billows which rolled in, untamed from the open sea. We glided swiftly past the entrance of the inner harbour of the insular

* Let the learned find fault with this supposed contemporaneous existence of Old and New Tyre, when they have reconciled the contradictory statements of ancient writers relative to these cities.

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Tyre, and caught a glimpse of its quay—a vast amphitheatre of white marble rising in steps from the water's edge, and covered every where with a dense crowd in perpetual movement. Beyond the colonnade which crowns this amphitheatre, are seen the fretted roofs and spires of the temples and palaces of the city, many of which are overlaid with gold, while others display the utmost variety of gaudy colours.

Our destination was to Old Tyre, situated on the main land at some distance towards the south. The whole line of coast between the one city and the other is indeed completely occupied with buildings, some devoted to commercial purposes, and others to pleasure. The ancient port exhibits a style of marine architecture altogether unlike that of the modern city, or of any other I had hitherto seen, and evidently belonging to a very remote age. We entered between two huge and mishapen towers, constructed of enormous blocks of unhewn stone: they form the extreme points of two circling quays, not so much elevated above the level of the sea as always to prevent the swell from invading the enclosed space with copious aspersions. Since the commerce of Tyre has been removed to the new town, the ancient port has been used almost exclusively by small vessels, employed in the home trade of the

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Phœnicians. I observed also in docks a considerable number of sumptuous galleys, belonging to the opulent merchants who still prefer the ancient to the modern town. A rude, irregular, and dilapidated wall, not less than fifty cubits in height, runs along the shore as far as the eye can reach. The upper part of this rampart is curiously diversified by jutting galleries and turrets, some of which exhibit the most costly decorations, while from others are shamelessly suspended the tatters of extreme indigence.

Our galley was moored close under the wall, at some distance from the central brazen gates by which admittance is had on occasions of ceremony. A clumsy apparatus of perpendicular steps, lowered from an aperture in the wall at a considerable height above us, was the incommodious and unimposing mode by which we entered the far-famed ancient Tyre. In descending from the wall on the inner side I found myself in a small court, crammed to suffocation with men of all nations, who were here awaiting arrivals from their distant homes. The courtesy of the Samian captain extricated me from the crowd, and aided me in finding the house of the Greek with whom I was to lodge.

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CHAP. II.

THE wealth and magnificence of Old Tyre are completely immured. Abroad one sees nothing but narrow and tortuous passages, between stupendous walls; and unless the visitor has access to some of its prison-like palaces, he will look in vain for proof of the adage which is now in the mouth of all nations, that "The merchants of Tyre are princes."

Oppressed by the sultry climate, and by clouds of dust which embrown the sky, the stranger pants for space and air, as he forces his way through an interminable maze of lanes and alleys, choked with a dense and exceedingly ill-mannered population, whose rudeness is sometimes actually perilous to one accustomed only to the courtesies of a Grecian town. These ways are, moreover, blocked up with the frequent stalls of petty venders, and by groups of wretches, huddled together on every space where shelter is afforded from the scorching sun. Many of these miserable loungers—houseless, naked, and emaciated, and

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some of them horribly afflicted with the diseases peculiar to the east, are seen, as if in mockery of their hopeless woes, engaged in games of chance; the stake being a faded and tattered girdle; or a handful of a certain intoxicating drug, much used by the people of Tyre; or perhaps the mutilated image of a god, in coarse pottery, rudely gilded and painted.

In traversing these narrow ways one is frequently compelled to turn from the path, in deference to the prerogatives of the many sacred animals that roam through the city. There is hardly a quadruped or a bird of unclean manners that may not be found thus privileged to obstruct the path. I have even found it necessary to make a wide circuit to avoid disturbing the slumbers of some enormous snake, which lay coiled and basking its dusty scales in the sun, on some less frequented space. These bloated divinities are, for the most part, attended by a guardian, whose office it is, club in hand, to assert and defend the rights of the lazy god, the wanderings of which he follows from morning till night, and for the sustenance of which he impudently demands contributions from the passenger.

Go where you may in old Tyre, nothing hardly is seen on either side but blind walls, rising to a fearful height, and in some places impending

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above, so as nearly to exclude the light of day. A narrow and jealous entrance, recommended by no ornament, and here and there, aloft, a jutting balcony, are the only objects that diversify these prodigious surfaces of masonry. Yet if you can gain admittance to the interior of any one of these gloomy structures, you are dazzled with the lightsomeness of a palace;—you find saloons, decked with ivory, gold, and sumptuous tapestries, and furnished with couches of solid silver, and with vases of exquisite pottery: you see on every side pictures, statues, carvings, and rare productions of art or nature, brought from every climate; and you find gardens of delight, cool with groves and fountains, and gay and rich with flowers and fruits.

If you would see a wider sky, and breath a somewhat better air, you must advance towards the skirts of the city, and pass its inner wall. In these exterior quarters, and in distinct compartments, are found the dwellings of the different nations that have permanent establishments at Tyre. These resident strangers build after their own fashions; and in half an hour you seem to pass from India to Egypt; and from the banks of the Nile, to those of the Ister. I was solaced to find here two or three Grecian streets, in which hardly any object reminded me that I was not

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traversing a town of Attica, or Bœotia, and at home in the happiest of lands. The foreign suburbs are surrounded by a wall of recent construction, beyond which is a vast open space, covered with the confused desolation which reminds the Tyrians of the destructive siege of their city by the king of Babylon. Here are seen cavities and broken walls, affording shelter to abject wretchedness in its last condition of filth or squalid disease;—men and animals crowded in the same dens of loathsomeness and want. Or where the ground is less broken it is occupied by irregular circles of huts, not more commodious than those of the most barbarous tribes, and within which nothing is found that the eye can rest upon with complacency.

In another direction there are extensive excavations, formed long ago by the removing of soil for forming the gardens of the opulent, or for raising mounds on the margin of the sea. The precipitous and crumbling sides of these ancient pits are pierced, like a honey-comb, by caverns, propped by the decaying ribs and keels of vessels. From these burrows are seen crawling in and out, swarms of naked children, black or dingy, with their haggard mothers, who, in this country, commonly before their thirtieth year, are as wrinkled and decrepid as women of seventy in Greece.

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On each side of the public ways by which this desolated and wretched suburb is traversed, there are usually several large encampments of merchants, lately arrived from distant countries, and for whose trains the city affords no sufficient accommodation. Droves of camels, horses, mules, and asses, packed closely together, and each tied by the leg to a stake in the ground, form a living rampart, within which are two or three tents, and sometimes a handsome pavilion, occupied by the merchants and their attendants; and in the very centre a confused pile of various goods, among which most often are to be seen unfortunate youths, torn from, or sold by their parents, and about to be disposed of in the market of Tyre.

Although these commercial travellers are, for the most part, Armenians, there are almost always in their trains, natives of other, and often of the most distant countries of Asia. In these companies one often sees the wild Caucasian, horrid in feature and beard, clad in undressed skins, and wielding a knotted club, such as the stoutest Spartan would shrink to receive on his buckler. Or near to the fierce barbarian, lounges the languid, long-visaged Indian, whose lassitude and delicacy of feature, not less than the fine linen of his attire, leads one, at first sight, to think him a woman. His ankles, his wrists, his ears, often his

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nose and lips, are laden with rings of massy silver, which it would seem a charity to rend from the owner.

Across the broken ground, and through the frightened crowds, recklessly gallops an intoxicated Scythian, reeling on his seat, and brandishing his lance. His horse's breast and flanks are heavily covered with a rattling garniture of skulls, leg-bones, rings of teeth, festoons of wizened ears, noses, and scalps, and whole skins of those whose blood he has had the luck to spill and drink.

In this place I had also the good fortune to see what is somewhat rare, even in this resort of all nations—I mean three of the female warriors of the Tanaïs: they rode small, shaggy, and black horses, playful as kids. Themselves were clad in a loose tunic, scarcely reaching to the knee, and which, belted round the waist, and open above, fell away from the right breast. A leathern belt, passing over the right shoulder, supported a small bow and quiver. Each, with much ostentation of skill, brandished a short-handled and doubled-edged hatchet: an ornamented boot, gay in flowers of scarlet and blue, graced the leg: the head had no other protection than a prodigious mass of flowing hair, loosely filleted, which now floated in the wind, and now suffused itself over the shoulders and bosom. They rode

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astride upon bears' skins, the fore paws of which met in a knot on the breast of the horse. These ladies were in the train of an opulent Borysthenian Greek, and probably attended him as articles of ostentation.

In the very midst of the confusion and desolation of this suburb, and enveloped in clouds of dust, raised incessantly from the arid plain by the hurried trampling of horses, mules and men, and by the trailing step of camels and elephants, may be seen moving along in awful pomp the glittering splendours of a Persian Satrap's train, just arrived at Tyre. During his progress through the adjacent wooded plain, where a delicious shade overhangs the way, the great man had rode a white Nisæan horse, which now, weltering beneath a crimson quilted cloth, figured with gold, is led by a youth in front of the procession. He himself is borne in a close litter, by twenty gigantic Ethiopians. This portable pavilion, of which one scarcely catches a glimpse, is closely guarded by a numerous military band, the bustling abundance of whose finery seems as if courteously intended to conceal from the eye of the vanquished nations the cruel edge of steel that is ever held in readiness to enforce obedience. The dresses of these guards could not have failed to draw forth an admiring crowd in the streets of

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Sparta, or of Athens; for the Greeks, who understand better than any other people the art of constructing, in the most advantageous manner, both light and heavy armour, and who know how to grace their defences with an exquisite simplicity of ornament, have no conception of the *sublime* in military millinery, as it is developed by the people of Asia.

The captain of the military band would probably have been mistaken by our Attic country-folks for no less important a personage than the Great King himself. He rode a black horse of bulky form, the head, neck, and breast of which were completely concealed by a plaited vesture of orange-coloured cloth, flowing nearly to the ground: this housing was covered with rows of golden pomegranates and silver bells, alternately. The rider wore a close corslet or mail of silver rings, which showed the person to advantage: his head sustained a towering bonnet of white linen, curiously plaited, from the summit of which two broad streamers of figured silk floated far in air, or fell gracefully upon his glittering boddice: an inner vest or shirt of white linen, spangled with gold, and fringed with flowers, flowed at large below his feet: from his belt, which sparkled with precious stones and pearls, hung, low down, a square and stunted sheath, furnished with a

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short sword, and daggers. He carried on his left arm a small circular buckler, ribbed with brazen convergent rays; from the centre of which stood out, in high relief, a silver lily. His spear, poised horizontally on the right shoulder, was used occasionally to goad his people forward. I should mention also that from his girdle hung a knotted whip, which with a Persian officer is, I believe, by no means a mere symbol of military command. The high-mettled steed of the captain seemed rather to obey instinctively the will of his rider, than to be governed by the bridle.

At a little distance after the military train, followed a promiscuous rout of attendants, male and female, and a drove of mules and camels, laden with motley packages of cumbrous accommodations. This uncounted multitude, which always drags itself in the rear of a Persian Satrap's travelling establishment, sweeps a fertile country like a swarm of locusts, to glut itself, and not seldom to perish, amid the desolation it has caused.

A dilapidated, but still lofty wall, probably the remains of the original rampart of ancient Tyre, surrounds the dismal and desolated space of which I have spoken. On passing any one of its gates towards the east, the greatest contrast imaginable meets the eye; for the fertility,

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verdure, and richness of the plain of Tyre are extended up to the very foot of the ancient wall. Instead of crowded wretchedness and confusion—of aridity and ruins—of sultry heat and poisonous exhalations, one finds instantly the delicious coolness of thick shades, and all that lusciousness and splendour of vegetation which are produced upon an alluvial soil by a fervent sun, plenteous irrigation, and skilful culture. The vine luxuriates upon the outer surface of the wall, of which the inner exhibits nothing but the effects of ages of insufferable heat. The fig-tree, the orange, the olive, the mulberry, the pomegranate, form clusters in the open spaces devoted to the humbler species of esculent plants; while the fruit-bearing palm, rising to a height rarely seen in any other country, graces the scene with its frequent tufts, towering towards the cloudless azure.

The cool and abundant river of Tyre, sparkling down from the heights of the two ranges of Lebanon, skirts this fertile plain; and innumerable canals convey its life-giving waters over the surface. Towers of no great elevation, occupied by the keepers of the gardens, are sprinkled over the level. From the summit of one of these structures the eye surmounts the groves. Towards the west the prospect is bounded by the irregular, ruinous, and lowering structures of the ancient

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city, stretching far to the north and south. At a considerable distance beyond, and somewhat towards the north, rise, in a condensed cluster, the glittering turrets and glaring roofs of the insular Tyre. Towards the north-east the delicious valley I have mentioned stretches into the distance, till it is lost between the closing ranges of Lebanon. These, on the right hand, are of moderate elevation; but on the left they rise into the region of perpetual snow, and when seen either under the fervours of noon, or the lustre of a setting sun, exhibit all the exquisite variations of rainbow colouring.

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CHAP. III.

I DID not long delay the principal object of my journey to Tyre, a visit to the venerable and far-famed temple of Melekartha, by the Greeks absurdly called the temple of Hercules. Excepting perhaps one or two of the Egyptian temples, the fane of the Tyrian god is unquestionably the most ancient structure, civil or sacred, now existing in any country within the range of our knowledge. Even supposing the antiquity assigned to it by the Phœnicians to be exaggerated by national vanity, still evidence of the most satisfactory kind carries back the date of its erection to an age far more remote than that in which Greece was first visited by civilization.

The sacred precincts of Melekartha occupy a large part of the plain which lies south-eastward of old Tyre: its canal and basin are supplied with water, always pellucid and cool, from the river of Lebanon. On issuing from a gate in the ancient wall, already mentioned, the sacred grove, in a dense and compact form,

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bounds the prospect. From the centre of this mass of sombre verdure rise the turrets and roof of the fane, broken up into an infinite diversity of fantastic devices, and every where covered with burnished gold, or with broad shields of polished silver, some of which—stand where you may, dazzle the sight by reflecting the rays of the sun.

A broad causeway of white marble runs in a direct line from the ancient city-wall to the entrance of the sacred enclosure. The sides of this elevated road are richly covered with symbolic sculptures, and it is bordered on each side by a row of stately palms. A wall, not much inferior in height or magnitude to that of the city, encircles the whole of the space sacred to Melekartha. This barrier is passed through a portal, not altogether unlike those of the Egyptian temples; yet, differing in the style of its decorations, inasmuch as the palm, not the lotus, furnishes the elementary principle of its embellishments. The passage through this gateway is of very unusual proportions; for although in height it corresponds to that of the piers, on each side, it is scarcely wide enough to admit three men abreast; and even this space is narrowed by a brazen wicket, through which one person only, at a time, can pass. I noticed that the granite

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pavement was worn into a deep channel in the centre of the passage, by the feet of worshippers, who, during unnumbered ages, have pressed the same track.

On emerging from the gateway, the visitor finds himself in a small open court, or vestibule, which he crosses diagonally; and by a door, formed of a single block of marble, gains admittance to the solemn glooms and mysteries of the temple.

He first enters a grove to which the eye discerns no limit. Nothing is seen on all sides but the trunks of stupendous oaks, rising, destitute of branches, like tortuous columns, to a prodigious height, and bearing at their summits a dense unbroken roofing of foliage, through which the noon-day sun rarely finds a passage: or if here and there a ray reaches the ground, it sparkles on the red and naked soil like a fire of naphtha. The trunks of many of these ancient oaks are, to a great extent, decayed or riven; and of most the grey and rugged bark seems as incapable of favouring the assent of sap, as a sea-beaten rock. The sinuous and enormous roots run far along the surface, bare and voluminous.

A horrid silence reigns in the grove, except when disturbed by the sudden scream and flap-

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ping wing of vultures — useful ministers of the god — which, towards evening, are seen singly urging their lazy flight, from side to side of the enclosure, just beneath the leafy roof. High, on many of the grey trunks, sacred serpents, splendid in colours, and of enormous size, coil themselves to sleep; or hang, with yawning jaws, as if lifeless, a half of their length from the stem to which they cling.

The priests of the god are divided into an inferior, and an upper, or more sacred class: the latter, being constantly in attendance upon the divinity, are found only in the fane itself; while the former, a much more numerous body, pass the greater part of their time in the sacred grove, where they may be seen—especially during the heat of day, lounging lifelessly in groups; or huddled together in the cavities about the roots of the trees, or stretched supine on the level spaces. I saw several hundreds of these men; but not one well proportioned, or of manly or muscular form: all were either reduced to the last stage of deplorable emaciation; or bloated and corpulent in a degree which rendered them equally the objects of pity. It seems that this unnatural kind of life, which deprives the mind of every motive, either frets and consumes the animal system like a perpetual fever, or, in more

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inert constitutions, leaves the processes of secretion to go on without a check, until the sack has received its utmost complement.

In compliance with the rules of their order, these men are but slightly clad: they wear linen trousers, tightly girt about the waist by a zone of gold and purple: a tunic, fitted to the shape, covers the body, but leaves the arms bare: a slender thoracle of divers colours, chiefly green and yellow, covers the neck. Their heads are closely shaven, and their feet always bare. A vow, sanctioned by tremendous imprecations, binds every minister of the Tyrian divinity to perpetual virginity; this institution, to which no parallel can be found in any country, is said to be rigidly adhered to, and every Tyrian affirms and believes that a female foot has never trodden the ground sacred to Melekartha:—that none of his servants ever transgress the awful limit which divides them from the common condition of mortals, is more than I dare affirm dogmatically.

No track or path indicates the course that should be taken in traversing the sacred grove; and without a guide the stranger might long wander and lose himself in the gloom: as the soil supports no kind of vegetation which might show the track of feet, and is every where loose and arid, and every where alike trampled by the sauntering

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priests, it is in vain to look to the ground for the vestiges of a beaten path. The difficulty of finding the inner precints is increased by a belt of impervious thickets, the single path-way through which would never attract the eye of a stranger. But having passed through this dense jungle, the visitor reaches the inner wall of the grove, and passes it by a door, formed, like that at the entrance, of a single block of marble, turning upon a central pivot. From the dim and chill obscurity through which he has wandered, he emerges in an instant upon the glare and fervour of day. The sudden change at first baffles the senses, nor can curiosity satiate itself until the eye has become accustomed to the brightness of the scene. A vast lake of translucent water, basined in white marble, fills this central space: it is surrounded by the inner wall of the grove, the lofty verdure of which is seen on all sides above it. From the very centre of the lake rises a quadrangular pyramidal structure, consisting of four diminishing cubes, or blocks of masonry; the topmost of these platforms sustains the fane or naos.

Unlike the temples of Egypt, or of Babylon, the venerable house of Melekartha is constructed neither of stone or marble, but consists entirely of cedar. Though the general form of this timber

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edifice is as simple as that of our Grecian temples, its sides and roof are broken into a multiplicity of surfaces by jutting turrets, galleries, cloisters, and fantastic decorations. When first discerned on emerging from the grove, the fane, by its thousand reflections of the sun, and by the bright colouring of its ornaments, distresses the eye, which involuntarily seeks repose upon the dead and dark surface of the lake.

A barge, of cumbrous form and huge dimensions, is the only keel that ever disturbs these tranquil waters. This vessel, which is stationed mid-way between the margin of the lake and the temple, is propelled by fifty rowers: the wretches who perform this service, and who are chained to their benches, are captives, or, as some affirm, criminals, whose lives having become forfeited to the god, purchase, in this manner, unwillingly a lengthened existence.

My guides made the accustomed signal:—the barge slowly moved to the spot where we stood, and having received us, pushed from the side, and in a short time brought us to the eastern front of the basement of the temple, where a flight of steps, jutting from the perpendicular side of the building, meets the waters of the lake. I gladly clung to the girdle of the priest who preceded me on this fearful ascent; having

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reached the top of the first quadrangle, we ascended the second in a similar manner, by steps running obliquely from the centre to the corner; and thus to the topmost; when we had attained which we overlooked the surrounding grove, and seemed to breathe more freely by again beholding the world of common objects.

The fane or naos* of Melekartha occupies nearly the whole surface of the basement which immediately supports it. Its sides are constructed of the trunks of the largest cedars which Lebanon has ever produced: these are placed contiguously, and in a double row; the roof is formed in a similar manner, but with timber of smaller bulk. Every part of the exterior surface is plated with the precious metals. In not a few places this thin coating has fallen or curled away from its attachments, so as to expose the cedar trunks, and these, by the deep fissures that run into their substance, and by the grey colour they have assumed, satisfactorily attest the high antiquity of the structure. There can be no doubt that the summers and the winters of many ages have

* The word *temple* belongs to the whole of the sacred precincts: the fane or *naos*, is the edifice in which immediately the divinity resides.

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imparted the venerable tints they exhibit. Perhaps the world itself was young when the cedars of this temple graced the summits of Lebanon with their sombre verdure.

A range of small apartments, occupied by the higher class of priests, runs along the sides and back of the temple at some height from the basement, and is supported by columns; a shade and shelter is thus afforded in the open air, and here the ministers of the god spend a great part of their time. At the invitation of its occupant, we ascended to one of these apartments, there to await the hour of sunset, before which strangers are not permitted to enter the fane. Had I not been under the protection of an opulent and powerful citizen, I should perhaps, notwithstanding the courtesy of his address, have declined the offer of this priest's hospitalities. The darting glance of his small eye smote me with a superstitious, but I dare say, unreasonable alarm, which probably took its rise from what is vulgarly reported of the secret rites of the Tyrian deity: and certainly the whole appearance of this sacred personage agreed well enough with the most horrific suppositions. His dark and gross complexion, and flabby corpulency, seemed to ask for a greater amplitude of attire than the rule of his order admits: and, in truth, the dingy tint

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of his dry and pendulent skin, his inert, painful, and crawling movements, the jerking action of his mishapen limbs, and especially the malign side cast of his little eye, gave him altogether very much the appearance of one of those enormous toads which one sometimes discovers among ruins in a sultry climate. All the self-command of which I am master was not more than I had need of, while seated within the reach of the broad sinewy hand and long fingers of this servant of Melekartha. Happily a menial, of less revolting appearance, presented to us the fruits and cakes which were offered for our refreshment; and I felt that the presence of my Tyrian friend rendered any suspicions in partaking of them needless.

At the request of my friend, this dignified functionary muttered over the customary puerilities relating to the origin and adventures of the divinity. I gave little attention to his recital, partly because the substance of it was not new to me; and partly because I had already succeeded in obtaining powers for examining those ancient and veritable records, known to be preserved in the recesses of this temple, from which I doubted not to gain information vastly more authentic and important than any that could be given by the priests.

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At length the tedious hours had elapsed; a gleam of fiery redness declared the approach of the sun to the horizon, and a brief twilight was succeeded by the effulgence of a cloudless night.

We now descended from the chamber where we had passed the afternoon, and presented ourselves in front of the temple. The lofty entrance of the fane is closed by a triple veil, of skins, purple cloth, and white linen. This was raised by the attendant priests with a show of reverence and fear, and we—not perhaps devoid of some sincere trepidation, entered the awful presence-chamber of Melekartha! Clouds from the altar of incense obscured our first view of the objects before us: at the same time, an oppressive heat, and a suffocating, sepulchral atmosphere, overpowered the faculties. Some minutes elapsed before I regained self-possession, and I almost feared that I should be compelled to retire without actually seeing what I had performed a long journey to behold.

Two lines of columns, each column formed by the combination of eight enormous cedars, support the roof of the temple; the carvings and golden embossments of which are but dimly perceived at so great a height and through the vaporous medium. The spaces or aisles on each

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side, between the lines of columns and the walls, are divided into cells or compartments, not unlike to those which contain the consecrated treasures in our Grecian temples; and these, like those, are replete with costly articles, dedicated to the god by opulent citizens, or by the kings of distant nations. Whoever would acquaint himself with the history of the east, should diligently examine these splendid baubles, covered as they are with names, dates, and memorials, whence the knowledge of wars, alliances, and revolutions might, with great certainty, be gathered.

In the centre of the middle space or aisle is the altar of incense—if altar it may be called; for nothing is seen but a brazen grate, level with the floor, laden with aromatics, and kept in perpetual ignition by a fire beneath. In front of the fumigatory altar, a railing, running from side to side of the temple, prevents the advance of strangers. At a considerable distance beyond this barrier, and directly opposite to the entrance of the temple, are two huge blocks of porphyry, serving as bases to the far-famed pillars of Hercules (thus we are wont improperly to designate them). Of these two columns, that on the right is of the purest gold, elaborately wrought from the plinth to the capital with symbolic embellishments. The general outline retains an

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obvious resemblance to the form of the ancient Pharos.

The other column is, as the Tyrians stoutly affirm and believe, notwithstanding its bulk and altitude, a solid emerald. By whatever means the effect is produced, it is certain that this magnificent pillar emits from its whole surface a dazzling flood of light; and it is solely by the green and sparkling effulgence of the emerald pillar that the interior of the temple is illuminated. Nothing can be imagined more beautiful than the splendour of this coloured radiance, as it diffuses itself through the vast spaces of the building, gleaming dimly from the stately columns and the distant fretted roof, and mildly sparkling from ten thousand points of the sumptuous gifts which load the walls. A dark and voluminous curtain, at some distance beyond the columns, gives strong relief to their shining surfaces. The ulterior chamber, separated by the curtain, contains the throne of Melekartha, of which I shall have occasion hereafter to speak.

No resemblance or statue of the god is seen in his temple. The most solemn secrecy veils the rites by which he is placated, and which take place always in the vaults of the lowest of the basements which support the fane. Since on the one hand, the Tyrians have been subject to the

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rule of the Persians, and on the other, have received a mitigating gleam of our Grecian philosophy, they have learned to maintain a strict and haughty taciturnity whenever the rites of the ancient Phœnician worship are alluded to. I attempted not to urge inquiries which manifestly gave uneasiness to those to whom they were addressed. Although I have seen too much to allow me to believe, as some Greeks affirm, that horrid ferocities and loathsome impurities have been altogether banished from the service of this divinity, I can readily allow that some small reforms and mitigations may have reached even the inmost dungeons of this ancient structure. It was probably the mere working of a highly-excited imagination which made me think, whilst in the interior of the temple, that I caught from time to time the monotonous wailing of wretches confined in the depths beneath.

We gladly left the presence-chamber of the Tyrian potentate, and inhaled with pleasure the freshness of the night. At break of day we ascended, by a painful effort, to a gallery on the roof of the sacred edifice, and there watched the rising of the sun. The scene from this elevation is singularly beautiful:—immediately beneath us jutted out the huge sculptures of the roof, resplendent with their sheathings of gold and silver;

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At a fearful depth beyond these are seen the ledges of the several basements of the temple, and beyond, on every side, the dead surface of the lake. The belting grove bounds the near prospect, and by its depth and extent seems to forbid the hope of again taking part in the busy transactions of common life. Beyond this dark circle, towards the west, the palaces and temples of the old city, and at a great distance, those of the new, blazing in the sun, gaily front the deep azure of the distant sea. Directly north, the eye traces the line of coast, as far as Sidon, every where gemmed with buildings. Towards the east and south, the ranges of Lebanon rise in successive stages from the region of perpetual summer to that of perpetual snow. Mid-way between the valley and the loftiest summits runs an undulating belt of cedar and pine forests beneath which arable and pasture lands stretch down into those luxurious plains, which have well been termed the garden of the world.

Having satisfied the first eagerness of curiosity, I quitted the precincts of Melekartha, intending ere long to visit them again, to prosecute those researches for the sake of which I had come to Tyre.

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CHAP. IV.

The insular Tyre attracted my curiosity much less than the ancient continental city; for although the boundless wealth of its merchants has decked it in splendours such as perhaps no other city in the world can rival, the eye is soon satiated with a magnificence which reminds one much more of opulence than of taste; and which, moreover, is scarcely at all recommended by any associated recollections of remote antiquity.

The insular rock which sustains the modern Tyre has indeed been occupied from a very distant age by habitations; but until of late they were those of the inferior classes of the community, whose employments connected them immediately with the sea. Not a vestige of those ancient dwellings is now to be discovered; for after the siege of Old Tyre by the Babylonian king, the Tyrians felt the necessity of securing themselves from invasion in some more effectual manner than can be done by mere walls; they

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therefore betook themselves to the rock, which was cleared, levelled, and greatly enlarged; and which the resources of their still undiminished commerce enabled them quickly to cover with princely mansions, and to surround with a rampart that excites the wonder of mankind.

The walls of New Tyre have been often enough described by travellers. These artificial bulwarks, together with the rocks upon which they rest, seem to render the island absolutely impregnable; and in truth one must think it so, at least while the Tyrians continue to be masters of the sea. The citizens of all classes are accustomed, in a tone of ill-concealed arrogance, to affirm, that, with the fleet they possess, they might safely bid defiance to the collected forces of all nations. Be this as it may, it is unquestionable that a people occupying, as the Tyrians do, an insular position, favourably situated, and possessed of a numerous and well-appointed navy, and drawing to themselves by their superior intelligence and industry, as to a common centre of exchange, the commerce of all nations, can hardly fall under servitude, unless by its own fault.

But amidst the vauntings of their pride, the Tyrians overlook the mortifying fact that, already a foreign power grasps the sinews of their strength. They forget also a not less humili-

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ating circumstance of their present condition— namely, that, among themselves, by the natural and unchecked encroachments of power and cupidity upon weakness and necessity, the vast wealth of the community has clustered itself together into a comparatively small number of enormous masses, which oppress and obstruct the movements of the body politic more than enrich it; and which, while they corrupt the few, leave the many in a condition of desperate wretchedness, such as deprives them of every feeling of patriotism, and allows the only hope of relief to fix itself upon gloomy ideas of revolution and anarchy.

If the Tyrians would return to a real and safe prosperity, and to national independence, they must submit to such self-denials as are necessary to afford to every industrious citizen a sure and immediate way of escape from the horrors of hunger. Had she enough of wisdom and of virtue to admit the obvious suggestions of common sense, Tyre might yet again become the mistress of the sea, the queen of commerce, and the arbitress of empires. But how easy soever in theory such national reforms may seem, one shall much sooner find instances of an entire people resolving to perish by their own hands amid the ruins of their homes, than of a community actually taking a step towards pristine simplicity

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of manners, or yielding an iota to the loud demands of equity in their political constitutions.

A style of architecture combining the tastes of the eastern and the western nations appears every where in New Tyre, and produces a thousand forms of incongruity: for while the Genius of Greece has, in many instances, been called in to put her hand to the work, she has manifestly performed her task more as a slave than as a mistress; and has rather ministered to the absurd pride of wealth, than, as in Greece, given expression to the pure and felicitous conceptions of cultured intelligence.

Nevertheless, in the midst of its barbaric magnificence there is one important respect in which New Tyre is strikingly distinguished from the great cities of Asia or of Egypt; for instead of two or three stupendous works which stand as monuments at once of the absurd arrogance of the sovereign, and of the helpless misery of the people, one sees on all sides mansions fit for kings:—yet no where the frowning palace of a tyrant. There is not, it is true, a structure in Tyre at all comparable to the temples and palaces of Babylon, of Thebes, or of Memphis; but then it is filled with dwellings such as monarchs need not be ashamed to inhabit.

Few of the houses are of less than four stories;

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and many invade the sky with eight or ten. Horizontal space is husbanded and multiplied by every imaginable ingenuity of contrivance. The halls and chambers, except in the houses of the most opulent citizens, are small; and costliness of decoration is made to compensate for the want of amplitude. For the most part, each story is occupied by a separate family, and each gains access to his apartment by open staircases and galleries, which project from the fronts of the houses. These common ascents and ways are scarcely less crowded with passengers than the narrow streets beneath, so that, look where you may, above, or beneath, nothing meets the eye but a countless crowd in perpetual movement. In no city of the east or of the west have I witnessed any thing so amazing as is the populousness of Tyre.—In many places lofty galleries run along continuously from end to end of the streets, and are bridged across the intervals; and one looks up a fearful height and sees a second and a third crowd, hurrying to and fro, as if through the air: the entire surface of the city, perpendicular and horizontal, teems with human forms.

Or if one ascends to the pinnacle of some temple, which surmounts the houses, one looks down upon yet another populace crowding the flat roofs. On one hand appears a flowered

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canopy, beneath which the opulent are enjoying the freshness of the sea breeze, surrounded by the costly blossoms and fruits of an artificial garden. On an adjoining roof perhaps, a laundress, with her band of assistant nymphs, avails herself of the benefits of sun and air in her processes of purification. Every craft which requires space and light is to be seen from such an elevation. The population of a kingdom is in fact condensed within this hive of business and pleasure. Once and again it has emitted swarms to colonize distant shores; but has seemed to gain only a momentary relief by the reduction of myriads. Thus it is that when once the secret of productive industry is discovered, and an extensive field of barter actually occupied, human life abounds beyond all powers of calculation, or of diminution.

Even the gods are compelled to conform themselves to the topographical necessities of the insular city; and as it would be an unseemly thing for mortals to look down upon the abodes of the celestials, the temples of Tyre are so constructed as rather to resemble columns or obelisks than habitations.—The sacred edifices, with their multifarious decorations, and many-coloured embellishments, after surmounting the level of the surrounding roofs, shoot up to the skies their

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glittering spires and turrets, and when seen from the sea in the blaze of the setting sun, convey the idea of a forest of golden pines.

The magnificent colonnade which encircles the harbour is at all times too much thronged by the common people to invite the presence of those who go abroad for amusement. Persons of this class repair rather to the summit of the walls, and especially to that on the eastern side of the city, which, while it is free from the occasional incursions of the waves of the open sea, offers a delightful prospect of the adjacent coast, and of the old city, and of the gardens around it; and whence may be watched the incessant passage of vessels, dancing over the billows of the boisterous strait that makes New Tyre an island. A gay awning, continued along the whole extent of the eastern wall, affords protection from the sun. On either side of the broad walk are ranges of pots, containing flowering and odoriferous plants; while the delicious fruits of the climate are here also exposed in abundance. In the semi-circular spaces afforded by the tops of the towers which strengthen the walls, companies of dancers, gracefully moving to the pipe and lyre, attract the eye; or the jugglers of Egypt or of India perform their preposterous feats.

Strangers from every country, far and near,

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may be met with on this rampart. I rarely failed to find upon it more than one group of my countrymen, wrangling, jesting, and contumeliously remarking upon the manners of the barbarians around them; who, though not less proud, yet, from a sort of instinctive consciousness of intellectual and political inferiority, every where cower before the men of Attica and Peloponnesus. In these companies I not only sought the refreshment of uttering my native language—a pleasure, by the way, of no mean kind to one who resides long in a foreign land, but enjoyed the exhilaration of a manly interchange of thought, upon any theme which accident might suggest, free from the caution, the dark suspicion, the degrading ceremonial, which crush the soul of those who breathe and speak only by the license of a tyrant. The gay and spirit-stirring altercations of men who disagree in opinion without animosity, because without fear, is a thing unknown to the nations of the east; for in every country of Asia, every man—not excepting the master, the noble, and the king, is the slave of some other, whom he dreads and hates: thus he acquires a habit of malign suspicion, which extends itself in all directions.

I have said that men of all nations are to be met with on the terrace of the eastern wall; but

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I should except the Persians, who, by a tacit convention, avoid the place where especial indulgence is given to freedom of speech. Should a Persian, ignorant of the usage of the place, or superciliously regardless of it, be seen lounging there, his ear would not fail presently to catch some sarcasm of envenomed wit, which must compel him to retire. The Tyrians, it seems, compensate to themselves for the political humiliations they endure, by using greater license of the tongue than is thought of in any other part of the Persian empire; and of course the Persians are the objects of these sallies of smothered pride. The truth is that the Phœnicians, and among them especially the Tyrians, though the subjects and the slaves of the great king, are necessarily treated almost with the respect and indulgence due to allies. Their services on the sea are absolutely indispensable to the maintenance of the Persian power on the whole of the western frontier of the empire. Nor is it certain that the mighty lord of Asia could at this time compel the submission of the Tyrians had they but courage to cast off the yoke.

Although it would be deemed a most treasonable doctrine at Susa, were any one so bold as to affirm that the willing services of a freeman are of more value than the whip-exacted labours of

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a slave; nevertheless, it is manifest that the Persians have silently come to the knowledge of this great principle of government; and though they dare not even whisper it one to another, they tacitly act upon it wherever occasion demands; and this is found to be the case at Tyre.

The Tyrians are therefore allowed to do and to say what would curdle the blood of a Mede, of a Bactrian, or of an Egyptian to think of. I was often amazed, even in the public places of the city, and especially while loitering upon the terrace of the eastern wall, to hear from the lips of these barbarians—as we are fond to call them, sentiments of that sort which the Greeks believe to be peculiar to themselves. But in fact, the energy of mind that is fostered by perilous and distant mercantile enterprises brings with it, naturally, much of that same freedom and expansion of thought which, in Greece, is the fruit of political liberty, of poetry, and of philosophy. Hence it happens that a Tyrian merchant and a citizen of Athens are found to entertain and to express opinions not so utterly dissimilar as might be imagined. The sea is the mother and nurse of liberty; and a nation of maritime traders, even though they may have been robbed of their independence by superior force, must be treated by the conqueror with a sort of indulgence that is

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anomalous to the rules, and abhorrent to the tastes of arbitrary power.—A maritime merchant-city is a thorny possession in the hand of despotism.

I can say little or nothing of those articles of Tyrian manufacture which are supposed to constitute the primary source of the wealth of the people. An impenetrable secrecy preserves these processes of art from the intrusion of strangers. The material and method of the celebrated dye are especially guarded with the most jealous care: I strongly suspect that the account of these matters, commonly received, has been promulgated by the Tyrians with the express intention of misleading the conjectures of foreigners who might compete with them in this lucrative branch of trade. Such precautions may perhaps be justifiable; but it is a capital error to imagine that the prosperity of a mercantile community can securely rest on the exclusive possession of any secret in art. With or without secrets, wealth and national importance will infallibly belong to the possessors of intelligence, industry, good government, and natural advantages of produce and position. Nothing but internal treason can reduce a people so favoured, to poverty and dependence.

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CHAP. V.

ADBEEL, a Tyrian merchant of great wealth and great influence in the state, had, in early life, visited the principal maritime cities of Greece, where he had not only formed friendships, but acquired a smattering, or perhaps rather more, of Grecian philosophy and intelligence. It was to this personage that I carried letters of introduction, and his powerful intervention obtained for me the means of freely prosecuting the researches which I came to Tyre to pursue.

The mansion of Adbeel occupies a large plot of ground without the walls of Old Tyre, near the Sidonian road, and opposite to the insular city. This gorgeous palace seems to have been reared, at no very distant period, upon the site of an ancient structure, which had been demolished by the Assyrians. Its style is thoroughly oriental, and though liable to the condemnation which a severe taste must pronounce upon gaudy magnificence, unchecked by any regard to simplicity, yet certainly cannot be beheld without admiration.

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The Greeks, it is true, by a happy intuition, have laid open the elementary principles of the human mind, and thus have reached at once, and almost without effort, absolute perfection in the combinations of form; and whoever understands the philosophy of Grecian art, must feel assured that nothing can remain for the men of future times but to tread scrupulously in the steps of our artists.

Nevertheless, if once we consent to descend from the high level of philosophical perfection, and abstract beauty, and if we wander in search of the marvellous, the dazzling, or the terrific, there are many styles that may be adopted with happy effect, which have no affinity with the rules of Grecian art. Whoever has contemplated the architecture—I will not say of the Egyptians, which may be deemed the mother of the Grecian; but of the ancient Syrians, the Babylonians, the Medes, and the nations beyond the Indus, must grant that there are other modes of producing powerful and felicitous impressions on the mind, besides the one which we justly deem the most pure and perfect.

Even the Greeks, with all their love of simplicity, have not entirely rejected the use of colours and gilding in decorating their buildings and statues; but the artists of the eastern nations avail themselves without scruple or parsimony of

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these adventitious means of effect; and if once one allows the license, it is impossible not to admire the copiousness and magnificence of conception with which it is employed. Paintings, in three strong colours upon a dark ground—veined marbles—polished plates of silver and brass—gay porcelain tiles, and glass, with painted grotesque figures, are profusely lavished upon the front of an eastern palace. And to these dazzling decorations, illumined by the beams of a fiery sun, is given the utmost possible force of effect by deep recesses; or, as they might be termed, fissures in the surface of the building, which, at a little distance, show a perfect blackness.

The impression produced upon the senses by such a front, seen under the quelling heat and brightness of a Syrian day, powerfully contributes its influence in support of the political constitution of society in these countries; and effectively aids to preserve inviolate the vast interval that separates the highest from the lowest class. I can assure those of my free-thinking and haughty countrymen who have never crossed the Ægean, that they would find no small effort of their high spirit necessary to retain the dauntless attitude of a Grecian citizen, when—relaxed by a luxurious climate, about to

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enter the gorgeous portal of a palace which looks more like the abode of a god than of a man.

The general plan of the mansion of Adbeel is the same as prevails, with few exceptions, through the east:—An extensive quadrangle encloses an open court or garden, from which all the apartments receive light and air, and from which they are entered by galleries, running along the sides of the square. In this instance the front of the mansion is defended by a low screen of heavy columns, supporting a decorated entablature: between this barrier and the front of the mansion, is an open court, filled at all times with a motley crowd of the slaves and dependents of the master, or of visitors; besides travellers, with their numerous followers. In this place of noise and hurry, many, ere they can gain an audience, or transact the business upon which they come, spend days and nights encamped in groups.

The centre of the building presents five broad spaces, upon which are painted colossal and monstrous symbolic figures—winged bulls, human-headed lions, bears, dragons, vultures; in crimson, yellow, and black, upon an azure ground. These breadths are divided into compartments by stems of gigantic flowers, in gold, silver, and coloured stone; the sprays and foliage

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of which luxuriate freely from their stalks. A series of octagonal turrets crowns this central face; and upon these are placed, in various angles, innumerable mirrors, throwing far and wide the effulgence of day.

The wings of the front are cut by deep and narrow recesses, reaching from the ground to the parapet, so as to give a staring prominence to the gildings and paintings, and porcelain figures, that decorate the intermediate faces. When seen from some distance, a second front, receding from the first, appears fantastically towering above it. This is even more variously and gaily adorned than the lower front, and as it presents neither deep shadows nor sombre colours, it has an airy and unsubstantial appearance, highly pleasing and beautiful. Upon the roof of the higher story may be descried the pavilions and embroidered canopies, beneath which the ladies of the house enjoy the distant prospect, and the freshness of the sea-breeze.

I cannot but think that in the construction of this, and of many similar palaces of the Phœnician cities, the artists took their general idea from the appearance of Lebanon, as it is seen from the plains, where range above range, in distinct series, and gay with luxurious vegetation, recommend each other by progressive contrasts of

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shade and colour, until crowned by the pure pinky whiteness of the snowy summits.

The ponderous gates of an Asiatic house are opened only on rare occasions, and to visitors of the first quality; while a narrow and jealous portal, concealed in some deep recess of the front, gives admission to ordinary persons. Thus it is in the mansion of Adbeel: a narrow passage, seemingly formed in the substance of the wall, leads from a low side door into a spacious hall, where the Tyrian merchant-prince gives audience, and transacts business with the crowds of citizens and foreigners who are connected with him by their several crafts and callings. The court of business is so constructed as to afford to the stranger no opportunity whatever of prying into, or of holding correspondence with the other parts of the house. It receives its only light from a narrow open space, running the length of the hall, near to the ceiling; and even this space for light and air is greatly diminished and obstructed by the capitals of the columns that support the roof. The hall enjoys therefore little more than a dim obscurity, while a glaring side-light strikes upon the bold decorations of the roof, whence grim monsters look down terrifically upon the crowd beneath.

White marble panels between the columns

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are decorated with golden flowers, or rather sprigs and tendrils. Around each column are piled, in a sort of trophy, samples of the various articles of Tyrian commerce, comprising every rare production of distant climes.

A raised platform, gorgeously carpeted, occupies the upper end of the hall, and is furnished with couches for the more distinguished visitors. A band of Ethiopians, whose gigantic forms were but slightly encumbered by an attire consisting more of brass rings and of ivory, than of cloth, stood around the platform. Each with clasped hands, and motionless as stone, fixed his starting eye-balls upon the right hand of his master, as if life and death were hung upon its movements:—these slaves received intelligible indications of their lord's will from some slight extension or curvature of the finger, such as would altogether escape the notice of one not informed of this eastern mode of giving commands.

Each of the guards supported within his arms a pike, or as it should rather be termed, a wand, headed with a silver lily. Formerly these domestic attendants of the Tyrian merchants were completely armed; but danger being apprehended from this source by their Persian masters, the great king sent to several of the principal citizens a flower exquisitely wrought in silver, with a

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courteous hint that it was intended to displace the unsightly iron heads of the spears carried by their household slaves. The elegant device was obsequiously copied by all the Tyrians; and it would now draw upon a citizen a fatal suspicion were it discovered that his people possessed arms of any sort. Weapons are indulged only to those of the Phœnicians who serve on board the galleys in the king's service.

It was amusing to observe in the behaviour of those who had to transact business with Adbeel, the mixture of the rudeness and liberty that belong to commerce, with the cringing servility and ceremonious deference that ever surround the possessors of immense wealth. Not in the open market could a more stunning din of altercation be heard than in this hall, even while those who were actually in conference with the master of the house were whispering the terms of their particular bargains, perhaps prostrate, or on their knees, kissing the floor, or crossing their hands devoutly upon their bosoms, while dictating to an interpreter, in a tone of profound humility, some knavish or impudent demand. If one were to believe one's eyes only, this hall was nothing less than the presence-chamber of an absolute monarch: but if the ears were to be trusted, it was no better than a place of meeting for hucksters.

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Perhaps there is no city in the world where so much that is incongruous meets together..

I enjoyed the liberty of private friendship in the house of Adbeel, and traversed all those apartments that are open to male inspection. The saloons and chambers are arranged in five stories, around a luxurious garden, and are all entered from open galleries, supported by fluted pillars of cedar, around which flowering creepers and odoriferous and fruit-bearing plants are permitted freely to entwine. These corridors are furnished with couches of ivory, ebony, and silver, supporting crimson mattresses, which invite repose in a shade where every thing delights and refreshes the senses.

The central garden presents, on the southern side, a bright amphitheatre of flowers and fruits; and on the northern affords the gloom and freshness of dense foliage. The two aspects of the garden are divided by clusters of trees, among which are seen the cypress, the broad-leaved plantain, the tamarind, with its yellow blossom, the prickly pear, the gigantic aloe, the mulberry, the fig, the orange, and the lemon tree, with the spice-bearing plants of the far distant eastern islands. In the very centre of the garden a cluster of palms, which from their size must have belonged to the ancient mansion, towers far above

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the general verdure, and lifts its tufted heads almost as high as the loftiest pinnacles of the palace. Yet from trunk to trunk, almost at their greatest height, hang festoons of the creeping plants which, by their abundant foliage, completely conceal the black and rugged stems. The plane also vegetates freely in this enclosure, and reclines its wide-spreading boughs upon columns of marble placed to sustain them.

The space in the centre of the southern flowery amphitheatre is adorned with aviaries, containing birds of rare plumage; and it is graced also by some works of Grecian art, as well as by the gorgeous and fantastic toys of the Indian nations. Among these curious and costly articles I noticed particularly the model of a pyramidal temple, of twenty stories, each story decked with a curling roof: it was brought, as I was told, from a country far beyond the Indus. I noticed also a number of vases which, though not of the largest dimensions, or of the most elegant form, were recommended by the exquisite beauty of the material, and the richness of their decorations. If I may credit my informant, they are the manufacture of a highly civilized people, occupying a vast and fertile plain far beyond those burning deserts and horrid solitudes which the Greeks imagine to form the limit of the habitable earth

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towards the east. Each vase exhibits some quiet and inviting scene of domestic enjoyment and of secluded repose.—Gay gardens, elegant villas, with lakes and rocks, form the pleasing back-ground to groups of simpering figures, attired in a manner altogether peculiar; but which reminded me more of Egypt than of any other country known to us. I could not but compare these agreeable representations with the decorations of the Grecian, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, or the Persian potteries, which almost invariably offer to the eye the sacred personages or religious rites of the people, and display dark symbols, sacrifices, processions, the combats of heroes, or the effigies of gods. But, on the contrary, these ultra-oriental paintings contain not the slightest allusion to religious belief, or ceremonials; to mystic philosophy, or to sacred or martial history:—they are all familiar, intelligible, placid; and they sooth the imagination by holding forth whatever is most pleasing in the privacies of a country home. One must suppose that in this far distant land of smiling contentment, more regard is paid to the happiness of mortals than to the honours of the gods; and perhaps it would not be too hazardous to infer that a perfect political system, benignant, invariable, and efficacious, leaves no room for those exploits of brilliant

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violence and ruffian heroism, whence the painters and sculptors of Greece derive inexhaustible subjects of art.

The principal saloon or banqueting hall in this mansion, is, in fact, a roofless court; for the draperies, which protect it occasionally from the sun or rain, are withdrawn whenever no such canopy is needed; and on a festal night, when the eye has become fatigued by the glare of artificial splendour, it may look up, and, with grateful delight, repose itself upon the mild magnificence of the heavens. Every one has heard of the peculiar brilliancy of the stars in the climate of Syria; and I have thought they are never seen to greater advantage than when shedding down their steady effulgence upon the glittering poverty of lamps and diamonds.

A numerous band of musicians occupied a gallery at the upper end of the saloon; and I must on this occasion, frankly confess the surprise, I might say the overwhelming delight, with which I first heard a burst of Phœnician music. I grant, indeed, to our Grecian performers in this branch of art, as well as in every other, the praise of profound science and pure taste; but it must be acknowledged, that the musicians of Asia, I should say especially of Syria, have found powerful means of kindling lively and

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passionate emotions—not indeed by the exquisite modulation of successive tones; but by the simultaneous and accordant combination of a plenitude of dissimilar sounds, so related to each other that the nicest ear is offended by no disagreement. Every imaginable variety of wind and stringed instruments, with drums and cymbals, and with the human voice, is associated in these delightful clamours of congruous melodies, which now melt away into a thrilling and silvery whisper, and again suddenly shake the heavens with a thundering peal.

The people of the Syrian Palestine and of Phœnicia still adhere to those ancient notions and usages which allow to women free access both to private and to public entertainments. In the present instance the wife and beautiful daughters of Adbeel, together with several of their female friends, graced the banquet, and joined, without restraint, and without conscience of harm, in the conversation of the men. Both sexes are manifestly improved by this liberty; and indeed I think that, apart from the softening influence which they derive from this source, the national energy, vivacity, and haughtiness of the Tyrians would render them the most harsh, if not ferocious, people on earth. I know not that in fact the women of Phœnicia are at all

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less virtuous than those of Greece; and it is certain that every unnecessary restraint upon social life not only diminishes the amount of enjoyment, but operates as a wrong done to nature which will corrupt the passions, much more than restrain them.

Dido, the eldest daughter of Adbeel, took her place at the left hand of her father: the seat at his right was occupied by his eldest son, apparently younger than his sister. Next to him sat a youth to whom Dido had been espoused from her earliest infancy, and by whom, not improbably, her heart was possessed, although the inclinations of neither party had ever been asked or thought of by the disposing parents. The authority of the father is not exercised so absolutely among us as in Asia; and there are those, perhaps, who would accuse me of harshness were I to express the conviction that the imperative matrimonial connexions to which the people of the east are accustomed, produce, in an average of instances, quite as large an amount of connubial bliss—or let me use the more sober term, contentment, as those which result from the unrestrained choice of the young. It is certain that, in the choice of a wife, most men exercise far less coolness of judgment than in any other affair of importance: or, in other words, the

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accidents of caprice, more often than discretion, determine the lot of married life. If it be so, it is manifest that the majority of men could suffer very little damage if the election were made by another for them; and probably most men would be gainers by transferring their right to a discreet friend; and to whom better than to a father?

The complexion of Dido, much less dark than that of her brother, was of a pearly, translucent, sombre tint, scarcely showing at all the roses of a Grecian cheek and lip; and yet not deficient in the indications of health. Her profile, more prominent than that of our Grecian women, and her well chiseled lips (if indeed I might borrow from art a term for describing the inimitable perfections of nature) bespoke dignity, and even a certain heroism of character. Yet this noble and almost haughty expression, was balanced by the melting brilliancy of the eye, set in a halo of dark olive, and shadowed by a black and copious brow.—Every grace of a kind heart played about her look. Her volumnious hair, black and sparkling, and barely, if at all, confined by a golden band which passed across the forehead, took its pleasure in sportive license over her bosom and shoulders. Her bodice, fitting closely to the figure, was of azure silk, upon

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which the needle, fraught with silver thread, had spent its utmost powers. The lower dress, ample and far flowing, was of the fine white linen of India, and bore a flowery elegance of pink and gold.

Ear-rings, necklaces, bracelets, and a gorgeous zone, thick set with amethysts, displayed at once the boundless wealth and boundless fondness—not to say large ostentation, of Dido's father. But the lovely wearer, by the animation and simple ease of her manners, and by the good sense and sprightliness of her conversation, quickly withdrew the eye, not merely from the richness of her attire, but almost from the graces of her form; and left to those around her no thought but of the gay benignity and intelligence which were thus so congenially embodied. She sat reclining upon a couch, the frame of which was of solid silver, and its mattress, covered with crimson cloth, was flowered with pearls.

Without affecting a Spartan contempt for oriental magnificence, I must confess that, amidst the oppressive splendours of the banqueting hall of Adbeel, I sighed, once and again, for the simplicity, the good taste, the sportive wit, the unanxious freedom of a Grecian entertainment. Wealth has its powers—too much envied by those who possess it not; but these faculties of

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pleasure have soon done their utmost; nor can ever compete with the inexhaustible resources that lie open to intelligence. The women present on this occasion no doubt contributed a beneficial influence, as well as a grace, to the banquet; notwithstanding that most of them were haughty, trivial, and absurd. The men were gross in their manners, gluttonous, reckless of the comfort and feeling of others, ill informed, and difficult of approach. The course of the entertainment was obstructed by an infinitude of irksome ceremonials; and worse than all, there seemed to hover invisibly over the table of luxury and pleasure, the dread dæmon of political suspicion.

I left the palace of Adbeel in company with a citizen of Thebes, whom I had often blamed for his too frequent and contumelious use of the term barbarian:—we had no sooner inhaled the freshness of the morning air, than he turned quickly upon me, and, in a tone of triumph, asked—"Do we then wrong these Asiatics by our contempt:—except the lovely Dido, what have we seen to-night but gold, pride, and gluttony?

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CHAP. VI.

The principal festival of Melekartha was celebrated shortly after my arrival at Tyre, and by the management of Adbeel I enjoyed the opportunity, disguised as a Tyrian citizen, of witnessing more of the ceremonies than is willingly disclosed to strangers.

The rites on this signal occasion commemorate the descent of the Tyrian god into the infernal regions, his combat with nether divinities, and his happy emergence to the light of the living.

As the starry sky in Syria is peculiarly brilliant, so is a clouded night in this climate often of an unusually thick darkness; for the vast volumes of cloud which at times roll on to the land from the sea, being arrested in their progress by the heights of Lebanon, accumulate over the narrow plains in quintuple tiers, and utterly exclude every ray of light from above. On such a night of pitchy blackness, and under a suffocating, unabated heat, did the two cities pour

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forth their united swarms in honour of the dread Melekartha. The roofs, eaves, turrets, and galleries of every building, as well as the masts and yards of every ship in the harbours, were crowded with lanterns, various in colour and device, all of which received ignition nearly at the same instant, when the sun, after shooting a fierce and scorching ray through a portentous assemblage of crimson clouds, sunk in the sea.

To the spectator who occupied any elevated spot on the continent, the island city, banded in its dark and lofty walls, seemed at this moment to throw the burning brightness of a furnace to the heavens:—and the lurid splendour, reflected from a billowy roofing of thick clouds, gave the idea of a rugged island of fire, floating high in air.

Presently after this illumination had taken place, the harbour of New Tyre vomited forth a far-spreading flood of gaiety and splendour upon the surface of the sea; for a fleet, consisting of every vessel, of every kind, which these shores can furnish, and full fraught with citizens of high and low degree, made its way towards the continent. The greater part drew to shore at a point northward of the old city, where the crowds on board might commodiously effect a landing, and whence, without choking the narrow streets of the

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city, they might proceed to the plain in front of the great temple.

The galleys of the principal citizens, resplendent with lamps and decorations, rapidly parted from the centre of the fleet, and advanced in a line to the great gates of Old Tyre. They were preceded by a war barge of bulky form, bearing a tower, beneath the stride of which a ponderous engine of percussion, slung upon chains, protruded its threatening head. The brazen gates had been barred for the occasion with fragile beams, and the engine being brought to bear upon them, presently sent a deafening clangour far and wide over the sea, and the noise was reverberated in a lengthened roar, by rocks, and walls, and towers. The mock opposition, which seemed to indicate some asserted right of exclusion on the part of the continental citizens, ere long gave way before the reiterated strokes of irresistible force,—New Tyre prevailed;—the beams of cedar were snapped;—the brazen gates slung back with a bound, and the galleys in quick succession discharged their glittering crowds upon the spacious ascent which leads from the water's edge into the heart of the city.

Here we fell into our places in the procession, and advanced, perhaps with more haste than solemn pomp, through the broadest of the narrow

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streets, towards the suburbs; and thence emerging by an ancient gate, entered upon the open space which separates the sacred precincts from the city walls.

This space was abundantly illuminated by festoons of lamps, which crossed the sky in all directions, suspended from tall masts. The impression of fear and sublimity always belonging to the spectacle of an innumerable crowd densely compacted, and steadily moving in the same direction, receives great force when seen by the light of torches and lamps, in contrast with the blackness of a cloudy night. And the sentiment that spoke from every face in this vast multitude favoured the same impression.—An indefinite dread and solicitude seemed to quell every spirit. —Every eye, glazed as in horror, was fixed upon the awful front of the temple, which, towering high above the gloom of the grove, strongly reflected the far-spread illumination of the plain.

It is common to accuse the Tyrians of great indifference in matters of religion.—No one would have thought such an imputation well founded who had been present on this occasion, when nothing like the levity of disbelief could any where be discerned. I must indeed acknowledge it to be possible that the entire amount of piety, due to the year, is, for the convenience of

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business and pleasure, crowded into this one night of solemnity and sadness.—Be this as it may, every Tyrian, noble or base, moved and breathed as if he thought his fate in suspense: every man looked as if he felt himself insulated from the myriads around him; as if lost to all interests of common life; as if about to pass alone through a defile of horror and danger. Not a spark appeared of that enthusiasm which springs up so readily in vast assemblages: all were mute and still; and each, according to his power of imagining the unseen, prepared his soul to attend the doubtful and dangerous descent of Melekartha into the dread regions of ghosts and eternal night.

The principal citizens act on this occasion on behalf of the mass of the people, and are considered as deputed by them to accompany the god in his progress towards the nether world. These important persons, who, in the progress of the procession through the city, had joined it confusedly, were, when we reached the causeway, carefully marshalled according to their respective dignities, by a minister of the temple. This official person peculiarly attracted my attention. He was borne on the shoulders of two tall and active slaves, who, by grasping each other firmly, and by marching in a measured step, gave a

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perfect steadiness and unison to the movements of the living column. The obsequious bearers appeared to receive the intimation of their master's will by the incessant, but no doubt intelligible, hammering of his heels upon their chests. Himself, by an astonishing suppleness of the spine, inclined this way and that, like a bulrush in an eddy of wind. While discharging his function he flung his broad and bony hand frequently from his girdle—which was its place of rest, to the heads or shoulders of those whom he wished to bring into line and order; and with extremely little deference to the wealth or rank of the splendid personages around him, he used force if in any instance his commands were not instantly complied with; and more than once, availing himself of the gigantic strides of his bearers, drove a sluggish and corpulent citizen before him at a running pace;—such are the privileges of the ministers of the invisible powers!

The complexion of this master of the sacred ceremonies was a dingy mottled black: his starting and blood-shot eye-balls rolled without a moment's rest from side to side: his lower jaw fell as if paralyzed, while his large and heaving nostril laboured to subserve the quick heavings of the lungs. He wore a close tunic of green cotton, cut short at the shoulders and knees

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by a band of gold. His withered legs and shapeless feet hung dangling down, and, but for their incessant movement, might have been mistaken for a pair of empty leathern wallets: his close-shaven skull was thickly covered with mystic characters, replete, no doubt, with sacred wisdom, enough to compensate for the lack of the same quality within.

All having been arranged, the procession advanced along the causeway, and entered the grove; in passing the utter darkness of which no light was afforded but that of a slender taper, borne in the uplifted hand of the marshal, who led the way through the trackless obscurity. With no better illumination we went on board the sacred barge, and slowly traversed the still waters of the lake. On reaching the temple, instead of ascending the pyramidal structure by the exterior steps, before mentioned, we entered an aperture opened for the occasion near the water's edge; and gained the upper surface by a laborious ascent, which seemed to pass round the quadrangles within the substance of the walls. On emerging from the passage we found ourselves in the centre of the fane, and directly in front of the pillars, which, however, on this sad night, neither emitted nor reflected their wonted effulgence. But at some distance within the recess,

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which ordinarily remains in perfect obscurity, appeared what is termed the throne of Melekartha—a huge block of porphyry, resting on a treble stage of white marble.

The walls of this ulterior chamber were hung with crimson curtains, portentously figured in needlework of blue and gold, with representations of hideous and gigantic monsters. On the right hand of the throne, and a little in advance of the steps, was a column of silver, surmounted by a broad disk, or sun, which, from its whole surface, emitted an intensity of light, like that of a refiner's furnace seven times heated. On the left hand was a similar column, giving support to a golden vessel, the form of which might allow it to be taken, almost with equal propriety, either for a drinking goblet, or for the model of a boat of antique fashion. But that the latter was its intention appeared from its having an oar or paddle projecting from the rim: a bird in the act of rising for flight was perched on the prow. This symbol is affirmed to represent a heaven-descended vessel, in which the Tyrian divinity once traversed the perilous waters of chaos.

Until of late—I mean about a hundred years—it was usual for a multitude of devout persons, and often the most opulent citizens, to descend, on this occasion, with the priests, into the lowest

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of the vast and frightful vaults of the sacred edifice, and to take part with them in the tremendous rites which are there observed; but it is now customary for the citizens deputed to attend the progress of the god to descend only as far as the third of the halls upon which the temple stands, and there to await the return of the priests, who descend, as it is believed, into vaults far below the deepest waters of the lake. These lowest chambers are affirmed to have subterraneous communication with an edifice sacred to the same divinity, near the marine wall of old Tyre; and it is currently reported that by this means the priests hold correspondences, and admit visits, which they conceal from the knowledge of the world.

Why the piety of his worshippers in modern times should fail to carry them through the whole of the ceremonial on this occasion, I cannot satisfactorily say; but notwithstanding the assurances I have had to the contrary, I conjecture that the horrific practices of the ancient worship of the Tyrian god are still adhered to by his ministers; and I presume that the Tyrians, well aware of this fact, and influenced by that amelioration of feeling which has taken place among them, in consequence of their intercourse with the Greeks, now shrink from participating imme-

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diately in what is sanguinary or ferocious in their religion.

There are, indeed, those who are fond of affirming that nothing worse than an empty spectacle of terror, intended to inspire the vulgar with a necessary awe, is now exhibited by the ministers of certain barbarian divinities, famed for the sanguinary voraciousness of their appetites. I am far from being disposed to exaggerate what is dismal or disgusting; nevertheless, I must tell these plausible apologists, not only that their suppositions are contradicted by well ascertained facts; but that they calculate incorrectly, and, alas! too favourably, upon the dispositions of human nature. I dare to affirm that in any country where there is an order of men separated by mysterious pretensions from their fellow citizens, and debarred from the common interests of social life, and actually herded together and immured in sacred edifices, such men will become, by a sort of physical necessity, gluttonous, either of horrors or of impurities. Go where we may, *a secluded priesthood* will ever be found to divide itself into two classes—namely, the hebetous and sensual, who abandon themselves to the tastes of a hog, or to worse abominations; and the malignant or fanatical, who, while they haughtily spurn the indulgences of the body, and

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contemn the enticements of voluptuousness, crave the aliment of horror, nor can exist without the stimulus they receive from frequent sights and sounds of torture and of death. Men of this class fix a devouring gaze upon the gushing purple of life, upon the writhing limb, and distorted features of their victim, and feel the delight that belongs to an instinctive passion, when glutted with its proper pleasure.

Every priest, of both orders, in the service of the god, gave attendance on this occasion; so that the ulterior chamber where they were stationed was crowded to excess; and as they reverently avoided trespassing over a line drawn around the throne, and seemed also reluctant to touch the drapery of the walls, every individual appeared to be struggling for space; and the feeble and the corpulent had almost to contend for life. This mute agitation, which pervaded the whole assemblage, combined with an indefinite expression of ghastly solicitude and excitement—ominous of the horrors in which they were about to act their parts, gave to the sacerdotal band the appearance rather of a company of victims, tremulously expecting the moment of their fate, than of the privileged and honoured ministers of a divinity.

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Apart from his fellows, and on the right side of the throne, stood the hierarch. One foot rested on the floor, the other was advanced upon the first of the marble steps. He appeared to be in the prime of life; and perhaps by his personal qualities rather than by the ordinary course of promotion, had reached so early the highest honours of his order. In stature he rose a head and shoulders above the common standard; and in form approached the style of the Grecian Hercules; except that a head of disproportionate size, a slender neck, and long-fingered delicate hands, indicated the predominance of the intellectual over the physical constitution. Unhappily for the impression his august figure would otherwise have produced, the unalterable rule of his order had robbed him of that volume of black hair with which nature would fain have graced his head and shoulders. The tonsure exposed a fearful protuberance and expansion of the frontal brain, billowed with inequalities, such as indicate a sort of greatness of character, not resulting from wisdom or magnanimity; but from a terrible sublimity of ideas, and an untamed force of the intellectual passions. The ample chest of the high-priest heaved with spasmodic violence, while the swelling nostrils laboured to subserve the panting respiration. The

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haughty under lip drove the upper too far from its position to consist with the tranquil character of true heroism. The slender brows, arched and wide-spread over the temples, remained almost motionless, even in moments of the greatest agitation, and might have been likened to the expanded wings of the heron, when she floats steadily through the upper skies.

The hierarch's attire, though similar to that of the other priests, differed from it, not, as one would have supposed, by greater amplitude; but by exposing more of the limbs. I should say also that it was graced by an abundance of brilliants. On his right breast rested an Egyptian jasper of large size;—green, spotted with red, like finger-marks of blood. A pectoral, formed of alternate golden balls, and bones of the human hand, supported a box of ebony, containing, as is affirmed, a relic of dire and irresistible potency; and nothing, it is believed, but the benignant forbearance of the possessor, prevents its being employed for the instant destruction of his adversaries, and almost for the dissolution of the frame-work of the universe. Mystic characters imprinted on the skin in a bright azure colour, covered the shoulders, pate, arms, and legs, of this sacred personage.

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At the time when, panting and exhausted by our long ascent, we reached the upper temple, the hierarch, stationed as I have said, had commenced the solemnities. His rigid arms were crossed upon his bosom, while his expanded fingers grasped the flesh of his shoulders, as an eagle holds its prey. His neck outstretched—he stared forwards with a sightless gaze, and muttered what seemed like a sullen defiance of some spiritual power; gradually his tones increased in vehemence, from a scarcely audible whisper, to a boisterous clamour, repeated in many echoes from the walls and roof. At length, fixing his eyes upon the floor immediately before him, and suddenly extending his arms to their utmost stretch, he poured forth a torrent of wrath, replete with tremendous imprecations, such as curdled the blood to hear:—an angry foam poured from his mouth;—his voice failed;—he paused;—and at the same instant the radiant disk, in the blaze of which he stood, and which hitherto had shed through the temple a light like that of noon—lost its intensity—faded into a sickly glimmer—and barely illumined the objects immediately around it.

Our conductor now directed us to advance.—With hurried step we passed between the great pillars, and following the sacerdotal route, who

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urged each other onwards, reached the extremity of the fane, where we descended upon a broad slope, roughly paved, to the spacious vault that fills the third of the quadrangular basements of the temple: thus we passed the uppermost of these vaults, in which, as I presume, are managed all those contrivances of light that excite the amazement of the spectator in the sacred structure.

Five rows of rude and enormous columns prop the roof of the cavern or hall upon which we had entered: at its distant extremity the flooring seemed to decline into a spacious cavity, whence issued up a lurid gleam, like that of a smouldering furnace. By this glimmer alone was the vast space illumined.

Having advanced a few paces, a confused yell from beneath caused every one suddenly to halt; and at the same moment the hierarch, leaving the front of the array, pressed through the throng, and approaching the band of citizens, stretched towards us his clenched fist, and in a voice hoarse with exhaustion and rage, exclaimed, "Apostates! pusillanimous sons of worthier sires —unworthy farther to attend the sad and perilous descent of the god—rest in this hall of safety until I, his favourite, and these his faithful servants, bring back to you the light of life—the symbol of his presence."

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What I had witnessed in Egypt, of the furious and fatal combats which, on certain occasions, take place among the priests, prepared me in some measure for the scene that ensued.—The hierarch had scarcely regained his place in front of the band of priests, when there rushed up from the distant cavity a route of furious or intoxicated men;—whether victims or ministers of the god it is hard to say.—One might, indeed, well have taken them for the supernatural birth of a sepulchre. They were barely, if at all clothed;—frantically threw up their bony arms, as if in the rage of despair, and uttering a shrill cry of terror, ran on towards their antagonists.

These wretches, I was informed, symbolize the ministers of the nether world, who dispute with the servants of Melekartha his descent into the regions of night. The contest that ensued, though by no means a mere feint of opposition, was unavailing and of short continuance.—After a few moments of horrible confusion and loud uproar, the priests, headed by their chief, and locking their arms together, swept the hall from side to side, and drove their antagonists before them down the cavity, into which all descended, with mingled shouts, shrieks, and groans. The whole route presently disappeared, and with them, every glimmering of light.

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We remained in this dismal and utter darkness, I know not how long; for the absolute absence of light deprives the mind, almost entirely, of its power of measuring time. No one addressed a word to his companions; nor did a sound from above or beneath reach the ear. At length a gleam of light broke from a recess in the side of the hall; and soon afterwards the company of priests returned with torches. Six of the most robust bore in their arms the hierarch, who, with rigid limb and glazed eye, lay extended in apparent death. He was thus carried up to the fane, where powerful stimulants were employed to recover the exhausted principle of life. Presently, regaining his recollection and energy, he broke from the arms of those who held him, and returning to his place near the throne, exclaimed — "Lord of light! return! return!"

A new splendour now burst from the solar disk, and at the same moment from the emerald column, the cheering radiance of which illumined the farthest recesses of the sacred structure.

Day was breaking when we left the precincts of Melekartha. The myriads who had passed the night on the plain, had already learned, by a signal-light from the highest pinnacle of the

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temple, that their divinity was again tranquilly seated on the throne of his power. They dispersed therefore in haste; and scarcely a straggler remained on the ground when the sun sparkled once more upon the roofs of Tyre.

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CHAP. VII.

THE information I had collected during a former course of travels through the east, had convinced me that the veritable records of remote ages were to be found, if at all, in the keeping of the Phœnicians, and of their southern neighbours. With the view of prosecuting researches in this quarter, I had returned to Corinth, fully furnished with the aids necessary for making myself familiar with the ancient and modern languages of the Syrian nations. I applied myself assiduously to the labours of acquisition during seven years; and while pursuing my private studies, availed myself daily of the opportunity, which may always be met with at Corinth, for conversing with the maritime people of Phœnicia and Palestine, multitudes of whom resort to that great centre of foreign commerce.

At length, believing myself accomplished for the task I had undertaken, I repaired, as I have already related, to Tyre; bearing with me letters of introduction which, I had no doubt, would

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avail to open to me those treasures of ancient lore that are known to be conserved in the temple of Melekartha.

At the time when the Persians conquered Phœnicia, the Tyrian god held in his service a very numerous retinue of ministers, who were maintained at an enormous cost by the state. This powerful and pampered body of men, by their wealth, as well as by their sacred pretensions, exercised an almost unlimited influence over public affairs, as well as over those of families and individuals. When however Tyre became tributary to the Great King, not only were the vast revenues of Melekartha grudged by the parsimonious conqueror; but the power and machinations of his ministers were feared by him; and the worshipper of fire, in his zeal for purity of religion, confiscated by far the greater part of the funds of the temple. It commonly happens when retrenchments are effected by the rude and grasping hand of a conqueror, that the reduction falls indiscriminately upon the serviceable part of public establishments, as well as upon the useless: it was even worse in the present instance; for while maintenance is still afforded to several hundred bloated and lazy ministers, whose function recommends itself by no plea of utility; the ancient and venerable college of learned mén,

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with the scribes, recorders, and historians, formerly attached to the service of Melekartha, has been dissolved, and that important institution irretrievably destroyed, which had existed through a long succession of ages, and which would have ensured to posterity the benefits of an unbroken thread of authentic history. Is it unfair to surmise that the Tyrian college of history was an object of dread to the Persian court, and was viewed as a too acute observer, and a too faithful recorder of its proceedings? The Great King, perhaps, while he could bend from his principles so far as to permit the Tyrians to adhere to their ancient errors, and could tolerate and support a sottish and ignorant priesthood, could by no means bear the thought that, in any part of his dominions, there existed a band of intelligent and independent men, watching his measures, and handing down to posterity a narrative of the acts of his reign;—a narrative deprived of flatteries, exaggerations, and apologies. None but the just, the wise, and the good, can fearlessly leave the pen of history to do its office.

The House of History, as it is termed, is an extensive building, situated in that part of the sacred grove that is directly opposed to the back of the temple. It is enveloped on one side in the

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deepest shade; on the other it is open to the lake; for its front forms a part of the circular wall that surrounds the basin: the apartments receive light and air exclusively on this open side. The building, especially when seen in contrast with the gorgeous temple, excites the most pleasing ideas of venerable simplicity, of learned seclusion, and of peace. The wings consist of apartments—long deserted, and now fallen into decay, in which once resided the members of the college, with their attendants. The centre is occupied by a spacious hall, in which a part of the business of the establishment was carried on: beneath it are vaults, replete with the records of remote ages. The level of the grove upon which the building stands, being considerably above that of the lake, the vaults receive light and air by apertures that are at some height above its surface.

A single officer—the solitary representative of the ancient college, now holds silent and undisputed empire in this domain of old Time. In this palace of forgotten lore, he finds his solace, amid the desolations of the evil age to which he has survived, by conversing perpetually with the memorials of brighter days. On paying him my introductory visit, I found him thus employed at the upper end of the great hall.

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Ebul Nisra, sole guardian of the records of Melekartha, has nearly completed his ninety-fifth year. When I entered he was seated on a mattress, in the oriental manner: his withered hands, loosely clasped together, rested upon an outspread roll of pale crimson skins, the undeveloped part of which lay beside him; while the part he had perused, wandered far upon the pavement. A flat linen mitre, of snowy whiteness, covered the head, and shrouded the brows of the venerable man: his copious and fan-shaped beard, of mingled black and grey, suffused itself over his bosom and arms, and even strayed upon the learned skin which engrossed his attention.

My unsandaled feet made so little noise upon the polished pavement of the hall, that the guardian of the records did not perceive my approach until my foot touched upon the extremity of the roll he was reading. At that point I halted, and in an attitude of not feigned respect, addressed him in the ancient language of Phœnicia. "Guardian of the archives of Melekartha, I come hither as a child to learn the first lessons of the veritable history of nations."

The unwonted and delicious sound of the language of ancient times, seemed to awaken the old man, as if from a dream: or should I not rather say, that these sounds imparted a

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momentary impression of reality to those dreams of distant time which absorbed his existence. My Tyrian patron had taken care previously to inform Ebul Nisra of the intended visit of an inquisitive "son of the islands," and had instructed him to permit and to facilitate my researches in the House of History. He therefore at once recognised me as the Greek to whom he must show courtesy; but without raising his eyes from the roll, he replied — "Come, then, offspring of the waters of ignorance; kindle thy lamp at the fountain of light."

It is true that I might, regardless of his permission, have availed myself of the order I bore in my hands; but for every reason I chose rather to conciliate the favour of this respectable functionary, who, beside that he claimed respect in virtue of the indefeasible rights of age, was qualified to direct and to facilitate my researches, and to relieve the many perplexities I could not fail to meet with in perusing documents so ancient. I therefore seated myself beside him, in the manner which indicated that, while I intended to treat him with the respect due to his years, his office, and his acquirements, I expected from him, in return, a perfect frankness and cordiality. I soon succeeded in drawing him forth upon that easy level of familiar converse which is proper to

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the intercourse of men who have no interests to subserve but those of learning.

The very temperament of a man who, through a long life, has devoted himself to books, often seems to assimilate itself, as if by a physical sympathy, to the qualities of the material with which it has had to do:—the man becomes, like the rolls and volumes around him, wan, sapless, and withered; and as the worm shows on what aliment it feeds, so does the man of books, at length, look like the very birth and creature of parchment. The face of Ebul Nisra—fissured and wrinkled, like the bark of an ancient oak, had exchanged its primeval uniformity of colour, for innumerable shades of grey, brown, and red. As if his brows afforded not shade enough to the visual organ, the old man's eyelids, thin and seared, hid perpetually more than half of the pupil: — this immobility of the lids, contrasted with the animated expression of the other features, gave an air to the face that seemed peculiarly appropriate to one who was the guardian of antiquity. One would almost have thought that, during the lapse of unnumbered ages, he he had been calmly looking out upon the revolutions of empire.

In a second interview, this venerable person described to me the constitution and purposes

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of the college of which he is now the sole survivor. — He spoke as follows: —

" Iroc, my master, now drinking perpetual bliss with the gods, died of grief at the age of one hundred and seven years, on that day of blackness when the king of the Medes—whom now the nether powers have hold of—issued a decree to snatch a pittance of bread from the mouths of the scribes and historians of this ancient house. At the time when the trowsered nations of Iran burst over the earth, and, from between the clefts of Lebanon, poured down upon the plains of Syria and Phœnicia, these halls were inhabited by threescore and fifteen learned and industrious men, by whose hands, and by the hands of their predecessors, during the flow of ages, the vaults beneath were stored with treasures of truth;—bundles of the light of time, consigned to perpetuity upon skins of crimson, each measuring twenty cubits, and each decked, like a bride, in gold, and silver, and fair colours.

" Melekartha — lord of the state — effulgent power—and patron of truth, founded our college long before the time when the Phœnician nation arrived upon these shores; even in that distant age when our fathers dwelt at the mouth of the mighty southern sea, and when they

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carried the merchandise of all nations upon the ebbing and swelling waters of that boundless flood. Even from that time to the day of our humiliation, did the scribes of the House of History continue diligently and faithfully to record the course and revolution of human affairs:—and beneath this pavement are deposited their labours. Son of yesterday, coming from the islands of ignorance, draw near, and gaze on the treasures of true knowledge!

" Seven of the servants of Melekartha, men chosen from among their fellows for their sagacity, candour, and diligence, after being absolved from their vows, were sent forth to walk abroad in the world, to make themselves conversant with affairs of state, and to stand at the right hand of kings. Their duty was to hear, to see, and to note all things. Their persons were sacred; their powers irresistible: they might interrogate whom they pleased. Kings, captains, and nobles were obliged, under terror of a tremendous curse, to reply, in the simplicity of childhood, to whatever questions they might put But if, in the negligence of the jovial hour, when the tongue so easily forgets its discretion; or if, in the bosom of beauty, where the wise are but fools; or if, in the walk of private friendship, where the generous think it great to

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be incautious; — if, in any place or time, they divulged a particle of what they had gained by the powers of their office, their faithless tongues were torn from their mouths with burning pincers, and themselves consigned to the nether regions of hopeless punition.

"These seven, called the 'eyes of Melekartha,' digested, without concert with each other, the story of their times; and thrice in every year, delivered their memoirs to the master of the House of History. He consigned these memoirs, successively, to seven scribes, each of whom separately read the whole, and formed a digest from them: these came again under the eye of the master, who combined them into a single narrative, containing whatever was valuable in itself, and confirmed by the concurrent testimony of all. The master's composition, after it had been duly revised, was carefully transcribed upon the most durable materials, and then deposited, along with the documents whence it had been drawn, in a cell of the vaults beneath our feet.

"Another company of the servants of the god was employed in transcribing anew, such of the ancient rolls as seemed to be hastening to decay. Thus were the actions, good or bad, of the men of every age, consigned to perpetuity.

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But you shall yourself inspect the treasury of time."

Thus speaking, the venerable functionary slowly reared his tottering frame from the mattress, and, supporting himself by my arm, descended to the vault or chamber beneath, filled, as he had said, with vast piles of writings. This chamber was in fact a long gallery, having the slight curvature which it received as being a part of the periphery of the lake. On the one side was a range of windows, whence the lake and the temple might be seen. Immediately beneath each window there jutted out a block of marble, serving as a table; and beside it an oaken chair. On some of these blocks there were still remaining skins, partly written upon; and beside them—reeds, a knife, and ink bottle; and here and there lay a cloak, a wallet, a staff, or the sandals of the scribes who last occupied the place.

"The hand of man," exclaimed Nisra, as we entered, "has touched nothing in this vault since the dark day when my master and his companions left it suddenly, in sadness of heart. The unseen finger of Time alone has toiled in this place these last threescore years."

The opposite wall of the gallery was divided into cells or recesses, hewn in the solid marble, and these were filled with rolls of skins piled in

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exact order. A brazen grating, by which each cell was closed, displayed in its ornamented open-work some device symbolical of the contents of the writings within, and thus to the instructed eye served as a pictorial index to the records. I noticed among these devices, gleaming in the horizontal light from the opposite windows—a hawk fluttering in the air and about to pounce upon its prey;—a horned lion ravening upon an ox;—a winged leopard, upon whose writhing limbs a scaly serpent coiled its length;—another represented a fair form, emerging from a spreading inundation; and another the hull of a ship, upon which the sun, the moon, and the stars threw down benignant influences.

"In the lowest range of these cells," said Nisra, "are deposited the most ancient of our records; in the range next above them, those of a later age; and so on to the uppermost, which you see are but partially occupied.—You come here not as a rude intruder, but as a humble and devout inquirer: I will therefore candidly confess to you that it is only in an imperfect degree that I, the most unworthy and unlearned of the servants of the god, can decipher the writings of the lower cells. They are written in a character which, in a very remote age, gave place to what is now termed the ancient Phœnician writing.

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Moreover the dissolution of our establishment has left many of these precious records to fall into a state of irretrievable decay; and I now abstain from laying even a finger upon skins which a touch might reduce to powder.

" But in the cells of the next range every thing is intelligible to one versed in Phœnician learning; and through these later records there are scattered so many incidental allusions to the events narrated in the more ancient volumes, that the fever of curiosity is in a great degree allayed. You may therefore contemplate with a mitigated regret these crumbling piles of inscrutable history.

" And now," continued the venerable man, " Son of the regions of ignorance and fable, bow to be schooled in the rudiments of veritable learning. Greek! I know well your fault—the fault, I mean, of your nation. But that I may the better gain your ear, I shall drop for a while my manner, and assume yours;—for Ebul Nisra is conversant with other modes of thought than those of Asia.

" Your people are lovers of the beautiful more than of the true. Nature herself has sent you astray from the path of sobriety, by the celestial invention and the fine taste she has given you—a taste of which not another people under the sun possesses even the rudiments. You call forth and

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embody every element of greatness, elegance, and sublimity, and while the men of other countries are cringing in servile dread at the feet of hideous idols—fit symbols of ferocity and lust, the Greeks—passionate of beauteous untruths, worship—not so much the gods as the creations of their own poetry and sculpture.

"But this very eminence in the bright and balmy regions of imagination, together with the vanity which such eminence engenders, sickens you in the pursuit of severe learning, and impels you to spurn whatever has no other charm than that of simple truth. Stranger! you are not ignorant of this fault, and approach the footstool of Melekartha, repudiating the fables of your people, and intent to gaze upon the fountain of unsullied light.

"You have found that little of truth is to be learned at home; and little or nothing any where else than in Phœnicia. You have seen that the Egyptian priests of modern times, in conversing with a stranger, think only how best they may disguise, by solemn obscurities, their utter ignorance of remote history. Their predecessors, grudging knowledge to the people, and covetous to retain it entire in their own keeping, hid it beneath symbols; and the substance so hidden, in an age or two slipped away from under the

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mask, leaving to the inheritors of the priestly dignity, nothing but a retributive incertitude and error, which now, they are fain to hide from detection by every artifice of privileged absurdity.

"The Chaldæans have done better than the Egyptians; and I pray you go to Babylon if you would seek confirmation of what you may learn at Tyre. Nevertheless remember that the historians, who from age to age have recorded the acts of the sultry despotism of Babylon, have at all times sat under the scorching rays of an intolerable tyranny. Not so the scribes of Melekartha, who have lived and written free from every fear, but that of violating the awful sanctity of truth."

I found that Ebul Nisra, though an Asiatic, and though he had passed a long life in a seclusion like that of a worm in an oaken beam, could adapt himself to our Grecian style of thinking: he had read our literature, as well as that of other nations, and by force of thought could transport himself, at will, into a foreign region of intellect. The generality of men, it is true, hardly free themselves from national and personal habitudes of mind, even while enjoying every advantage of large intercourse with the world. But there are a few who, by vigour of understanding, and by power of abstraction, reach unaided, the summit of philosophical independence, and even in the

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cell of solitude attain what other men gather only after long converse with the crowds of cities.

"Mark you well," continued the learned guardian of the Records, "the difference between your Grecian histories*—if such they may be called, and our Phœnician narratives of remote events. The former bear upon them broadly the characters of poetry and symbol; they ask for no credence, and receive none but from the vulgar. Your stories of heroes combating with monsters, your gods playing pranks with men wiser and more virtuous than themselves, are the substitutes for history, framed in an age when men of genius could instruct only by pleasing.

"Our Phœnician history is altogether of another sort, and destined to another purpose. The people of our busy cities, industrious, enterprising, opulent, are found to have been mature in understanding even on the very first pages of their history. Our statesmen have too well understood the difficulties of their craft—that of governing the people, not anxiously to desire the guidance of experience. What could the gorgeous mists of poets, or the childish riddles of

* The criticism of the learned Phœnician must be supposed to have been uttered before the writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon had found their way to Tyre.

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rude sages avail those who would learn how the wilful multitude is to be cared for and managed? The Phœnicians of every age have, therefore, been mindful to transmit to the next age a faithful narrative of the changeful course of human affairs in its own.

"Alas! I am speaking of times long gone by—and not to return. The men of the next generation will owe nothing to those of this: they must be wise in their own wisdom. Henceforward our public men, untaught by the past, will think of nothing but of ruling the state by the light of their personal sagacity, or by the sinister reasons of private interest. Fatal times! Tyre shall then presently fall from her high seat among the nations!"

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CHAP. VIII.

I ESTABLISHED myself in apartments of the House of History, rarely visiting the city, or allowing myself other relaxation than that of conversing with the kind and learned Ebul Nisra; or of rambling alone through the adjacent grove, which on this side is unfrequented by the priests.

During the months of three years I gave myself to the diligent examination of the treasures of old time, to which I had so fortunately gained access. I followed the advice of my venerable friend in abstaining altogether from the fruitless attempt to decipher the volumes of the lowest range of cells; and commenced my labours with those of the second, in perusing which I soon acquired a great degree of facility, nor was often compelled to avail myself of his assistance.

And now in what manner shall I attempt to communicate to others the vast fund of knowledge which in these three years I drew, with ever fresh delight, from the storehouse of truth! My Tyrian friend would tell me I ought faithfully to

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translate volume after volume: but I must take my own advice, and pursue a method more pleasing to myself, and, as I think, more so to my reader. Let him then understand that I am about to use the license of symposial converse:—a license, on the one hand, of condensation, greater than is allowed to the grave historian; and a liberty on the other occasions, of amplification, like to that which the poet claims as his prerogative. I intend to acquit myself just as a traveller does who, on his return to the circle of his familiar friends, strives to enliven the hours of easy converse by unsolicitous recitals of whatever stands forth on the memory in the brightest and strongest colours. If any wish for more of gravity and more of exactness, let them do as I have done—go to Tyre.

The archives of Melekartha relate principally, as might be anticipated, to the history of the Phœnicians. Nevertheless, in narrating the long, various, and eventful migrations of that intelligent people from the shores of the southern sea to the foot of Lebanon, they afford glimpses and splendid pictures of nations not a few, and these I shall not fail to introduce in their proper places.

I propose not to arrest the course of my narrative by turning aside to pursue matters of

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doubtful speculation. Yet a word or two on some subjects of this sort may serve to clear our path.

I am unable, on the authority of those of the Tyrian books that came under my eye, to make myself umpire among the disputants, or decide the much agitated controversy relative to the origin of the world, and of the human race; nor can peremptorily confirm the opinion either of those who believe the earth and its animated tenants to be eternal; or of those who think that the world sprang from the hand of omnipotence at a period not immensely remote; and that the various millions of mankind derive their parentage from a single pair. And yet, if compelled to give my suffrage, I should, on the ground of many allusions contained in the Phœnician histories, take side with the holders of the latter opinion;—and I have little doubt that the volumes of the lower cells, could their evidence be gathered, would confirm the supposition.

I may take this occasion to say that, from some vague information collected during my visit to Tyre, I entertain the hope of discovering, in the hands of an obscure and unsocial, but very ancient people, inhabiting the hills of Southern Syria, books of undoubted antiquity, which, as I have heard, set this question at rest.

The volumes I perused, left no room to call in

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question the truth of that tradition which one finds existing among every people, and which, indeed, is confirmed by a multitude of natural evidences standing forth on every hill-side—that the surface of the earth has once been swept by the waters of a universal deluge, fatal to man and animals, and from which, by some unknown means, a few only escaped to replenish the desolated countries.

Whence the existing diversities of language took their rise I have not been able to learn; nor shall stay to repeat the learned disquisitions of Ebul Nisra on this subject:—suffice it to say that he claims for the original language of the Phœnicians the very highest antiquity, believing it to have been spoken by the first men, and known universally to the learned of other nations, long after the several families had taken up their particular dialects.

Abundant evidence confirmed the opinion I have ever entertained, that the highest condition of civilization, and a perfect refinement of manners, belonged to those remote ages which we are too prone to think of as darkened by ignorance and barbarism. If the Tyrian books are to be credited, mankind has receded rather than advanced on the course of arts, manners, and morals; and if the Greeks and some other

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people have, of late, taken steps on the path of improvement, they have done nothing more than partially recover what their immediate predecessors had lost.

Because here and there we see a rude and simple people admitting gradually the advantages and embellishments which knowledge, industry, and commerce confer, we hastily suppose that we see before us the common and constant course of civilization, and then, reasoning retrogressively, presume that there must have been a time when the whole human race existed in a state of naked and houseless discomfort, destitute of implements, arts, and social institutions.

The presumption takes its rise from a groundless prejudice, is confirmed only by a partial observation of facts, and is contradicted by historical evidence. But even if the supposition of primeval barbarism were not contradicted by history, the contrary might strongly be argued, simply on the ground of the intellectual and moral constitution of human nature, which, though it may fall into decay and desolation—as a palace may crumble into ruins, is as manifestly intended for knowledge, order, virtue, refinement, as a sumptuous edifice is certainly designed to be filled with royal magnificence, and to shine with the symbols of power.

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The only fact in the ensuing narrative that is of a kind to surprise the reader by its contrariety to the existing order of things, is the extreme longevity attributed to the founders of nations, and indeed to mankind generally in remote ages. It appears from the Tyrian books that the head of a family not unusually received upon his knees his descendants of a fifth generation, and that he occupied the chair of paternal authority in a council of *ancients*, some of whom were his sons and grandsons.

What now if I should challenge this longevity as a perfection, rightfully belonging to the original constitution of human nature, and necessary to the full developement of its powers, though long since forfeited or withdrawn! The loss, damage, interruption, which spring perpetually from the early decidence of the intellectual and animal powers, and from the hasty transmission of paternal authority from hand to hand, have much the appearance of an accidental evil, which has fallen upon the goodly structure of the social body, but which must by no means be attributed to its primeval condition.

Human life, confined as now it is, within the bound of threescore years and ten, or of fourscore years, affords not space enough for the successive generations to link firmly one upon

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another;—it is a feeble series, possessing little of the consistency and strength of continuity. The progenitor has visibly declined from the force and integrity of mature years, and has begun to claim the aid and the indulgence due to infirmity, before the time when his grandsons are of age to receive from his lips, with full advantage, the lessons of ripened wisdom; while at the same moment, that is, when experience has corrected or confirmed the dictates of natural intelligence, his sons, arrogant in the consciousness of manly vigour, are little disposed—less than they would have been twenty years hence—to listen to the cautions of a senior. Thus he who is qualified to teach, and they who are willing to learn, come scarcely at all in contact in the quick progression of life.

Hence it happens that the inestimable fruits of experience fall to the ground ungathered, because in the very days of their autumnal perfection, the sons are too old and proud—the children too young and heedless, to pluck them from the tree. Thus every man sets forward on the perilous road of life almost like an unguided pilgrim in a strange land;—he who at the commencement of the journey should have informed his modest incertitude had then become inert or decrepit.

This same hasty withdrawment of man from

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the chair of paternal authority operates even to prevent the acquisition of useful wisdom; for a man scarcely cares to accumulate what he shall neither live to use himself, nor be able to transmit to his successors. Every father, at the season when the work of calm reflection should commence, sees his sons more his rivals than his pupils; nor can hope to retain the freshness and vivacity of intellectual vigour long enough to command reverent attention from his adolescent grandsons. Those healthful sentiments, therefore, on the one side of conscious wisdom and power, and on the other of humility and deference, of which the rudiments only just show themselves to belong to our constitution, are frost-bitten and withered by the quick decay of life.

An effort of imagination is needed to estimate the great effects that must result from an extension of the term of human life, in the political condition of mankind, and in the cultivation of the arts. The sage, or the inventor, or the artist, is just profiting by his first errors, is just setting out anew, and better informed, in the pursuit of excellence, when his steps falter, and he falls to earth, fraught with the promise of fruits that must now perish with him. The statesman or the monarch has acquired the better

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maxims of rule; has survived the calumnies and plots of faction; has taught the multitude to confide in his intentions, and to respect his wisdom, when he disappears from the throne of power.

But, perhaps, protracted longevity is an engine of power too mighty to be confided to the hand of man, selfish and cruel as he is; perhaps it is in compassion to the nations, that Heaven denies continuance to the vigour of manhood, and grants so few summers to the fair blossoming of pride and ambition!

Even within the compass of his thirty or forty years of efficient force, it is not seldom seen that a chief succeeds, by his personal qualities of courage and skill, to bind together in the same bundle of empire nations not a few, and plants his foot firmly on the summit of a colossal pillar of power, the commencements of which, small and contemned, are fresh in the memory of the very men who cringe before him as a god. To what fearful height then might grow the influence of a commanding spirit resting on the centre of government from age to age; wise to gather to itself daily new wisdom; always digesting its principles of action, always amending its modes of management, always tempering and polishing its weapons and instruments of rule.

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And let such a spirit be imagined to wield both the sway of acknowledged right, and the sceptre of an immemorial possession of power. His peers in age, who hold their own supremacies by the same title and usage which corroborates his, he governs by their sense of personal interest, while over the men of the younger generation he possesses the preponderating influence of actual superiority in knowledge and practised skill; and he compels the fears of the more recent race, compacted, as it must be, by the pressure of the incumbent ranks, into a perfect passivity, by the dread authority of a dominion, that is dated back from an almost forgotten age.

A system, like this, of natural nobility, rising rank upon rank, each loyal to the constitution which supports its own elevation, would secure the immobility of a pyramid to the graduated structure of society, and would give to human affairs a stability and serene consistence which poets attribute to the abodes of celestial domination. May it be supposed, that when man returns to the wisdom of beneficence and virtue, Heaven will grant to him again length of days?

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CHAP. IX.

THE Tyrian histories, at the point where I began to peruse them, find the ancestors of the Phœnicians firmly established and prospering upon the island of Tsoor,* at the mouth of the Erythrean Gulf. From my friend Nisra I received a narrative, in his oriental style, of the events which had preceded the time I have referred to. Although this narrative has somewhat more of the haziness and loftiness of poetry, than of the sobriety of mere history, I must present it to the reader, as necessary to his intelligence of many allusions in the ensuing story.

Sahor, father of five generations, sat supreme in the congregation of ancients. His eye still beamed the unabated brightness of manly vigour, his voice was clear and strong, and his hand, uplifted as he spoke, trembled not.—

"By the compulsion of heaven, tardy and not

* Successively called Tyrus or Tsoor, Gerun, Hurmooz, Ormuz, or Ormus.

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unkind, we go forth, Fathers, to possess the desolated inheritances of our progenitors. In every land ye shall find the monuments, torrent-riven, or embedded in slimy sediment, of their power and pride. Ye carry with you the records and documents of their deeds, of their knowledge, of their arts, and the maxims of their wisdom. Transmit to your sons the learning ye have inherited. But forget not their error. Attempt not, as did they, to raze from the hearts of the people the knowledge and fear of the Highest: rule as fathers—think not to be gods.

"In a dark and evil day, ye broke fellowship with the sons of heaven; and ye see that your children, the men of yesterday, have already run far, in heedless wantonness, on the broad road of vanity and delusion. Reclaim them as ye can; or give them a doctrine the best they will receive. Press always towards the better; and beware of that arrogance which Heaven will not endure. It winks at many errors, but flings its bolt at contumacious impiety.

"Look once again at the Tower of Pride; and far as ye go, carry with you the remembrance of the portentous ruin. Its western pinnacles still pierce the sky; but how is the glory of the fair structure scattered! The gold, the silver, the carved work, wherewith we had graced the

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labours of a century, lie shivered over all the plain. The mighty piers of the tower, firm as rocks—so we thought them—are riven, and start from their balance; the very bowels of the work stare upon us; and huge heaps of our toil hide the goodly proportions of the basement. Yet not as if high Heaven might be moved to jealousy by the tallest of the works of man; but it frowns, and will frown, upon the enterprises of impious ambition.

"Go then, taught by what ye have seen; and in the path of humble assiduity, beneficence, and wisdom—the path fit for man—bless the lands of your lot with ten thousand happy homes of peace and abundance."

The nations of mankind, each race apart, had long rested supine upon the wide and fertile plains that are watered by the Euphrates and the Tigris. They had dwelt in peace; yet only by avoiding to dispute the will of Sabtecha—prince of the sword, and chief of the proudest and the most numerous of the nations. Now that the day of dispersion was come, he, by right of force, claimed to remain with his people on the plain, while the other chiefs led their sons to distant lands.

The harvests of years had been stored, and

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now the tribes of men, laden with bread for the way, were, on the same day, and at the same hour, to set out on their long journey to the lands of their inheritance. The signal of movement was to be given from the summit of the Tower of Pride, for this was visible from the farthest verge of the plain. The bolt of Heaven had shattered the eastern front of the structure; but the western side remained entire; and its summit was accessible.

A vast mass of combustibles—bitumen, naphtha, and brimstone, had been piled upon the topmost stage of the tower: and at the moment when the shadow indicated the point of noon, fire was given to the mass:—a column of substantial smoke in billowy globes hastened to the skies. Not a movement of wind inclined the aspiring volume to the right or to the left; and one would have thought that, in defiance of high interdiction, the Tower of Pride was rearing its head, sudden and unbuilt, to the very pavement of heaven.

Every family—thousands strong, and girded for the journey, had rested on its ground. Every man, in front of his household, had stood, staff in hand, intently gazing upon the distant tower. Every eye of human kind, young and old, throughout the wide circuit of the plain, was fixed upon the same centre of expectation. No man

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spoke to his fellow; no man looked upon the vacant dwelling he had so long called his home; all thought of the way, and of the distant lot of his inheritance.

At the instant of the southing of the sun, when the black signal of dispersion burst upwards to the skies, the multitudes gazed for a moment upon the ascending wonder; and then turned and trode the ground, which never again should tremble beneath the feet of all mankind.

The house of Sabtecha—the sons of the sword, remained sole possessors of the plain, and of its cities. All beside had departed;—all but the people of Tsidon—chief of the least numerous, but most industrious and intelligent of the families of man. These, by their knowledge and skill in the useful arts, by their assiduity and address, had rendered themselves indispensable to the house of Sabtecha—haughty, reckless, and abhorrent of labour. It was the people of Tsidon who penetrated the secrets of nature, and taught the elements to subserve the purposes of art; it was they who knew how to impart to rude matter the hundred-fold value of mind.—It was they who transacted matters of barter, and came in between man and man, to finish strife by words of reason.

Themselves fond only of dangers, pomps, and

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revelries, Sabtecha and his people knew well the value of the arts practised by the Tsidonians, and by a tacit command, compelled them to remain upon the western bank of Euphrates, where they had long been stationed.

The intercourse between the two races was that neither of friends nor enemies.—Sabtecha addressed Tsidon, not indeed as he spoke to his people, in the tone of absolute authority, and yet so as left no liberty of dissent. The sons of Tsidon were therefore in fact, though no man said so, the servants of the sons of Sabtecha. But though force may prevail for a while over intelligence, intelligence is ever the stronger of the two—give it but time to use its proper weapons. Tsidon and the elders of his house, were high in soul, discreet in counsel, cautious, patient, and determined in action; and if more intelligent than bold; yet bold, when courage was the virtue of the hour.

The chief of the Tsidonians, yet in the fresh prime of manhood, for he numbered only fifty years, had so early reached the place of supreme power by the premature death of several elders of his house. Not distinguished by stature or peculiar grace of person, he held the respect of his people, and commanded the willing deference of the ancients, by the power and accomplish-

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ments of his mind, by his various learning, by his energy, promptness, and assiduity in affairs; and withal by the benignity of his disposition. In council he was a patient and candid listener to every one's advice; but quick to discern, amid the conflict of opinions, the better part. Frank and sincere in declaring his thoughts, he held in reserve only those determinations which the public good required to be veiled in secrecy.

With infallible intuition he distinguished between those measures which demand instant decision, and those which should be held in the balance of doubt for to-morrow's meditation. And it was by this faculty, rarely found in high perfection, that he was enabled to mediate successfully between elder and younger in the chamber of counsel. Age and youth, by frequent experience of his sagacity, learned to yield cheerfully to him their particular advices. In the final determination of Tsidon every man perceived that what was substantial and good among his own ideas had been considered and embodied: pleased with this deference, he willingly relinquished the neglected portion of his advice.

Among men of speculation and men of practice, the chief was wont to mediate not less felicitously than in the senate. It was common for him, by a happy conjecture or pregnant suggestion, to give

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a fortunate and useful direction to the pursuits of theorists. Nor less frequently did he remove the difficulties of the artificer, who, conversant only with the few facts of his daily experience, vainly attempted to surmount the unexpected obstacles of a new path. His success in these instances seemed to result not more from his sagacity, than from the modesty of his temper, and the patience of his attention. When the result realized his hopes he was pleased; but neither elated nor surprised.

Tsidon could even take up the implements of manual labour, and show to the artisan a better execution: thus he stood among his people of all classes, not merely as the rightful possessor of patriarchal power; but as the centre of intelligence, and as the guide and helper of all in their several functions.

Minds of high quality, conversant as they are perpetually with ideas of perfection, by which hourly they measure their own performances, acquire a settled mood of humility, such as imparts to the deportment something of the submissiveness and docility of childhood;—or at least, a manner totally unlike the arrogant self-importance of mediocrity. This meek greatness of temper—this fine polish, of which none but the rarest and most translucent substances are

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susceptible, when combined with the manners that belong to high birth, high station, and habits of command, generates a serenity—a cloudless benignity, a noiseless force, such as we imagine when we frame conceptions of the princes of the upper world. None of the chiefs shone with this grace like Tsidon; and he ruled in the deep recesses of his people's hearts with the silent energy of an invisible power.

Both banks of Euphrates, to a great extent, had become gradually covered with habitations, in larger or smaller clusters; but it had not hitherto been attempted to rival the vast and magnificent edifices, or the stupendous munitions of the ancient world. With whom originated the project of constructing a city regularly planned, and graced with sumptuous palaces, is not known. Not improbably, the pride of the one chief, and the intelligence of the other, who contemplated an ulterior result, concurred to the same end.

Tsidon, fertile in invention, and rich in the lore of antiquity, exhibited to the greedy eye of Sabtecha models of gorgeous palaces, public halls, temples, and towered ramparts. These images of costly greatness, as by a flash of ignition, kindled the desires of Sabtecha, who, in the haste and incaution of impatience, placed at the absolute disposal of his compeer, the whole means

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of the state so far as they should be necessary to the execution of these magnificent conceptions.

The preliminary work was to provide materials of better quality, and in far greater quantity, than the plains of Euphrates afforded. These, of every kind, were to be obtained among the mountains whence, in many streams, the river derives its waters. A numerous body of labourers, under the command of skilful Tsidonians, was therefore despatched northward, across the deserts, and on reaching the hill-country were employed in working the quarries of marble—in collecting bitumen, which flows in copious springs from the sides of the hills, and in laying the axe to the root of ancient forests. At the same time, vessels of all kinds, adapted to the materials they were to convey, were constructed on the banks of every navigable stream. These having received their lading, floated tranquilly down the current, and after discharging their burdens at the destined spot, were, by the especial care of Tsidon, drawn ashore, and preserved from destruction or decay.

To ascend Euphrates was never attempted. New vessels, presently constructed where timber abounded, supplied the place of those that had performed their single voyage. Thus while preparations were making to rear the palaces of

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Sabtecha, the thoughtful chief of the Tsidonians was collecting, unnoticed, a numerous fleet.

Every occasion of disagreement with the irascible lord of the sons of the sword was carefully avoided by the head of the subject race, who, without ever using the baseness of flattery or guile, found it not difficult, when right reason failed of its influence, to lead the wayward inferior spirit by the lure of its own caprices or impetuous desires. Neither law, nor force, nor pride, can prevent the greater mind from governing the less, when a greater and a less are moving together in the same sphere. Sabtecha, mighty disposer of the fates of men, 'centre of life,' and 'sun of favour,' rode the plain in the pomp of universal and absolute dominion. Nevertheless, the modest Tsidon was the spring of every measure of state that had in it the substance of wisdom and utility.

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CHAP. X.

One of the families of the dispersion—a race bold, rude, and inapplicable, had migrated no further than to the lofty region which skirts the plain, eastward of the Tigris. There, hovering among the hills, and breathing audacity on the mountain tops, it had, for a length of time, subsisted by the chase, and by its flocks and herds. But in course of years, as growing numbers pressed hard upon the means of support, these mountaineers had once and again, when especially urged by want, descended in arms upon the level country—advanced even to the banks of the river; and in their swift retreat, carried off the fruits and harvests of the defenceless cultivators.

With the rage of a lion disturbed in his lair, Sabtecha, when these provocations occurred, had led his people to the mountains, thirsting for revenge more than the traveller of the desert for

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the sparkling brook. Yet ever and again had he returned, not only exhausted and diminished, but insatiate; for the foe, always aware of his approach, which they descried from their heights long before he reached the foot of the hills, withdrew to inaccessible and precipitous tracts, to which the horsemen of the plain could only look up in impotent rage. After suffering far more damage than they could inflict, the hosts of Sabtecha had always returned to Euphrates feeble and ashamed.

The baffled revenge of a haughty and passionate spirit, fed from infancy upon servile submission, is, perhaps, the most impulsive and ungovernable of all the motives of which human nature is susceptible. Sabtecha, maddened by repeated defeat, either listened not to the calm counsels of Tsidon, or Tsidon, mindful of the deliverance of his people, left his oppressor to his own improvident rage. Instead of establishing a guardian force on the skirts of the plain, the wrathful chief swore by the sun, and by its scorching beams, that he would draw a belt of fire around the mountains, and consume his foes to a man.

To accomplish this dire purpose, Sabtecha led forth the whole strength of his people; none remained on the banks of Euphrates but the

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young, the aged, the infirm, and the pusillanimous. In the haste of anger, the precaution was forgotten, of leading to the war the chiefs of the Tsidonians, or their sons.

Soon as the host had gained an hour upon the eastern plain, Tsidon alone ascended the tower, and from the riven summit, watched its progress until sun-set, and again through the brightness of the second day, when the long array of war showed as a dark mist on the blue expanse. Already he had completed every preparation which could be effected without awakening suspicion, on this side, or on that of the river, and now he descended to the quarters of his people with the celerity that belongs to energy and intelligence, when the long hours of caution and delay are elapsed, and the moment of action is fully come.

Three only of the elders were privy to the designs of the Chief; attended by these, he hastened from quarter to quarter, leaving with each household a brief and precise command to repair at an appointed hour to the river's side, laden with such of the stuff as was most useful, most valued, and could most readily be transported. This part was left to the women, and to the less robust of each family. The men, at the beck of their leader, followed him to the arsenals

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where the vessels had been housed: these were quickly hauled into the stream, and moored in long order upon the western bank.

The next labour was to transport from the public granaries, which Tsidon had taken care should be well stocked in every kind, an abundant store of the means of life. The toils of a night and a day secured the fleet from the fear of want for many a month to come. The ensuing night was given to repose.

At the first break of day, the thousands of the people of Tsidon, ignorant of their fate, but calmly confiding in the wisdom and benignity of their Chief, issued from their loved homes of peace, and crowded far up and down the banks of Euphrates. The hour of assemblage was a time neither of mirth nor of sadness, but of tranquil expectation. The aged, indeed, sighed, and the young hardly bridled their indefinite impatience; but all observed the order and the silence which a great and eventful moment imposes. The mother clasped her suckling close to her bosom, called her children around her knees, and looked, now wistfully at the home she had left, and now alarmed at the rapid and billowy current which, more tumultuous than usual, seemed as if mustering its strength to bear away the multitude to the shoreless waters of death.

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The uplifted rod of Tsidon gave the signal;—every master of a family conveyed his household on board the vessel nearest to him. Tsidon remained on shore till the last of his people had left it, and then springing lightly to the side of the lofty galley of command, again raised his staff:—every cable was severed at the same instant, and the numerous fleet, abandoned to the current, floated down upon the rapid bosom of Euphrates.

The departure of the Tsidonians was witnessed from the opposite bank by all that remained of the race of Sabtecha. The escape of the subject people might not have become known until perhaps the moment of its accomplishment, but for one of those accidents which rarely fail to disclose every project of concealment in measures of state.—A marked difference of physical character—difference of colour, of habits, and of language, and that sentiment of vague causeless antipathy, which at all times readily springs up in the human bosom, had concurred to preserve, almost inviolate, the separation of the two races, although long living in near contiguity, and perpetually mingling in affairs of common life. And yet exceptions to this rule of aversion occasionally arose. There are emotions more deeply seated than that they may be controlled by political

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conventions, or restrained by ordinary prejudices: these free impulses in single instances broke over the lines of interdiction, and by their lawless force kept in remembrance the truth that the human family, though dissevered by arbitrary distinctions, is still of one blood.

Nevertheless the matrimonial unions which once and again took place between individuals of the two races, were darkened by the clouds of paternal displeasure. The chiefs withheld their sanction, and the ambiguous progeny usually remained within the maternal arms — the solace indeed of an unhappy wife; but the opprobrium of a mother compelled to take shelter in the house of her father.

Tsidon — not harsh or haughty or rigid by temper, showed a stern and resolved disapprobation of all such breaches of the rule of aversion. Motives of policy might influence his conduct; or it might be, that the repressed and smothered resentment of a high spirit, held by force in a subordinate place, prompted him indignantly to withhold his people from intermarriage with the house of the oppressor. In refusing his assent to every proposed alliance between the sons or daughters of his people, and those of Sabtecha, he exempted himself from the imputation of a contemptuous or hostile feeling towards the other

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race, by insisting upon the authority of immemorial usage; and when questions of this sort were under discussion, Tsidon would rather acquiesce in the arrogant pretensions of Sabtecha, than not insure his interdiction of a proposed alliance between individuals of the two families.

But though few monarchs have held a sceptre of more absolute sway over the hearts of his people than did Tsidon, yet he could not control the tender passions of the youths of his house;—any more than he could alter the direction of the morning breeze that whispers among the reeds and willows of Euphrates. Asmel, his own son—the son of his best loved and deceased wife, had seen on a day of festival, the daughter of a prince of the house of the oppressor:—he had seen, and loved, and won, and wedded, the lovely alien; and Aia had borne three sons to Asmel who had never yet clung to the knees of Tsidon.

The short, bright hours of intercourse were rare and furtive; nevertheless Asmel lived for Aia, and Aia for him. The lonely mother, scouted abroad, and frowned upon at home, held with her infants to the seclusion of her apartments; and while forgotten from the circle of her companions, she solaced her desolation by teaching her boys to lisp the name of their father, and to love his virtues.

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Asmel, though not privy to the counsels of the elders, had early divined the intention of his father; and he foresaw that this purpose, if accomplished, must rend him for ever from his Aia, and his sons: yet he could attempt no means for avoiding the sad separation but such as might more probably hasten the day of evil than actually prevent its approach.

On the eve of the intended departure, in the recklessness of despair, Asmel divulged to his wife the project of his father. Her shrieks proclaimed it to the household. Her aged grandsire, once high in command, was still, though decrepit, high in soul;—strong of heart in the power of a remembered strength; and resolute in purpose. He knew well the part of a public man; nor would hesitate a moment—though gentle in disposition, to break through the ties of private affection in discharge of his duty as a chief. Without hearing the entreaties of Aia, or of her dismayed husband, he stretched his withered and trembling hand from the bosom of the female slave that cherished the flickering warmth of life, and gave the beck of command to his attendants, who in an hour assembled around his couch such of the elders as could obey the hasty summons.

To these the purpose of Tsidon was communicated, and the measures proper to be taken

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to prevent its accomplishment were agitated, in brief and tremulous altercation. Some advised to despatch, while the darkness of the night might favour the attempt, the brand of an incendiary to the river's side:—others scrupled not to declare that they would, were it thought practicable to do so, deprive the Tsidonians of their chief by the stroke of an insidious knife. None ventured to propose that the feeble remnant of the house of Sabtecha should oppose open force to the people of Tsidon, in the completeness of their strength.

Tsidon was known to profess the law of unbending justice, and of high punctilious honour; and on this ground it was hoped—feebly hoped, he might be moved from his purpose by some argument rested on the principles of which he made his boast. It was resolved therefore by the elders to despatch a messenger requiring, or requesting, his attendance.

Tsidon quickly arrived, accompanied by five of his sons. He appeared simply attired in the habit of the master of a galley, and his hand rested upon the staff of naval command. At the moment of entering the hall, and without waiting for formalities of explanation from the elders, he thus spoke:—

"Ancients of the house of Sabtecha, think not to hinder us:—the dawn of deliverance for the people of Tsidon already breaks in the east.

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Nay, hear me—ye hold not in your hands any power of prevention. Already have I achieved the liberty of my children. Ye have well performed, Elders, your part towards your lord; I praise your promptitude and fidelity: no just blame can fall upon you, even though ye stand inert upon the bank of Euphrates and see the Tsidonians pass away from the shadow of the throne of Sabtecha. Sabtecha—if Tsidon knows to divine futurity, returns never from the mountains; or he returns on the haste of the dromedary, and bereaved of his people. I fear no pursuit;—despatch, if you will, your messengers; inform him that the oppressed are escaped!

"Yet hear me further, Ancients!—I do you no wrong. I take indeed from your service the bodies and the souls of my people; but in these you have no rightful property. I take also our household stuff, which we have gathered by the labour of our hands. I take, moreover, from the public stock, the bread we shall need until we can reap other fields; but I leave in your storehouses much more than its value in the costly products of our skill and industry. Henceforward serve yourselves by like skill and industry, as we, too long have served you, and you will bless, not curse our going."

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Forecasting some fatal resolution on the part of his unhappy son, Tsidon now detained Asmel near his person; and at break of day urged him on board his galley before the embarkation of his people had commenced. In the midst of the busy hour, and while in wonder and dismay the old and young of the other race were thronging the opposite bank of the river, to gaze upon the scene, the grandsire of Aia, borne on a couch, approached the brink of the stream, and in haughty defiance of the interdiction which had been issued to preserve the river from intrusions, he went on board a vessel, brought for the purpose, on the shoulders of his people, and made towards the galley of the chief, whom he thus addressed:—

"Contemn, Chief, if you will, the sorrow of your son, but contemn not the prayer of an elder, who stoops from his pride rather than endure to witness the wretched widowhood of his daughter. Contemn not his prayer;—or take with you, far as you go, the dread curse of an ancient. Tsidon! receive to your arms my children, whom I consent never again to clasp in mine."

Aia with her sons appeared beside her grandsire: she clung to his knees, but looked to the galley on which her husband stood. Tsidon spoke not; yet looked indecision;—a look none had

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ever traced upon his features before. Asmel failed not to read the wavering purpose of his father, and springing from the galley to the barge of the elder, caught his Aia and his sons in his arms, and in a moment placed them at the feet of Tsidon. The air shook with the acclamations of the people on both banks of the river. The Chief, glad to be thus vanquished by the popular voice, embraced his daughter and his grandsons.

It was on the fifth bright morning of the voyage that the Tsidonian fleet passed high land, which diverts the course of the river towards the west. These abrupt hills, covered with fruit-bearing trees, invited a brief repose on shore, and furnished a replenishment to the stores. No other delay was permitted by the Chief to his people during many days, and until the fleet reached a region of far greater beauty and plenteousness than the Tsidonians had ever hitherto beheld. The mighty river, now swelled by the confluence of streams scarcely inferior to itself, rolled its wide and copious waters among gentle hills, which it seemed reluctant to abandon. On both banks spicy groves dipped their pendulous foliage in the stream, while every open space shone with spontaneous harvests, and was bordered with luscious fruits.

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The vine, the fig, the orange, the pomegranate, the tamarind, tempted the hand on every side; while flowers, and flowery shrubs, turning their broad and gaudy disks of rayed splendour to the sun, filled the air with scents of soft pleasure. The cool air, tempered by the shade of dense forests, and laden with odours, and freshened by the rapid passage of so vast a river, inspired every breast with a gay felicity. The youth exulted in a merriment not to be repressed; the aged gave themselves to long-forgotten jollity: all rejoiced, all exclaimed—"See the providence and beneficence of Tsidon.—This then is the land of perpetual pleasures to which, from the house of toil, he has led us:—for this smiling bliss he has achieved our deliverance. Here we shall rest;—here, forgetful of the forge and the loom, breathe life, and pluck abundance amid the flowers of a perpetual summer."

The Chief rejoiced in the gaiety of his people, and gave no contradiction to their dreams of impracticable bliss. The barges and galleys were drawn high upon the grassy slopes;—tents were pitched on all the circuit of a rising ground; defences against the attacks of wild animals were raised, and the youths were sent abroad to gather the unlaboured harvests of the plains, and to collect the fruits and spices of the hills. The

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Chief had not yet divulged, except to a few, his intentions; and while the wise doubted if his plans were so soon accomplished; or if he had indeed proposed to establish his people in a garden of inert delight, none ventured to give utterance to their surmises.

Yet very many days had not elapsed before the people of Tsidon, formed by nature and by habit to win their happiness from toil, began to sigh beneath the burden of mere enjoyment. Gaiety slackened into listlessness: good humour was broken in upon by discontents; and at length unwonted appearances of insubordination—which may spring as well from riotous abundance as from want, excited the alarms of the elders:—all faces were covered with gloom, or suspicion.

At this moment, which had been waited for by the Chief, he convoked the rulers of the people, and thus addressed them:—

"Have ye indeed believed, Fathers and brethren, that Tsidon was not more wise than to lead his people to a garden of fruits and flowers, and there to leave them among delights which, even could they be perpetuated—and they cannot, must soon unnerve the body, while they expose the mind to the fatal turbulence of capricious passions? Even could we secure ourselves against invasion on these hills of fragrance, the

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flowers that deck them must presently blossom on our graves.

"We hasten then far from the specious death of this delicious region. It is enough that we have breathed a moment of refreshing tranquillity.—It is enough that we have replenished our stores.—It is enough that we have taught the unreasoning multitude that nature refuses to give the people of Tsidon a home among fragrant alleys of spices and fruits.—We go then in search, not of a place of rest, but of a spot where best we may earn happiness by skill and labour."

Preparation was instantly made for launching again upon the river. None murmured at the command to depart: rather a new gladness shone in the popular face. After a few days the numerous fleet once more glided down upon the face of the waters.

The morning of the seventh day brought the Tsidonian fleet to a sudden turn of the river, upon passing which, instead of verdant and fertile slopes, an unbounded level of sands and sedges spread itself before the saddened eyes of the people. The broad magnificence of the river now lost itself in a hundred sluggish streams, not one of which could claim undoubted superiority over its fellows. These languid currents, hid

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almost by a thick growth of tall and fainting rushes, wandered through a burning desert, upon the wide extent of which not a mound, not a shrub, not a rock, invited the eye to rest.

And now, instead of balmy, scented, and exhilarating airs, inspiring life and laughter, not a breeze alleviated the suffocating heat. The sun, from the moment of his starting to the upper skies to that of his disappearance, poured down an intolerable effulgence; and seemed to glare upon the earth in the wrath of an implacable power. The heavens, unbroken by a cloud, vaulted the wilderness like a roof of iron. A dense lurid vapour obscured the horizon. The people fainted; — a sullen silence held every tongue;—the mother returned scarcely a comforting smile to her distressed babes. The elders, as if in their languor they had forgotten their part, failed to urge the youth to the performance of their duty.

Tsidon, still alert in step, and unquelled in heart by the malignant power of heat, passed quickly from deck to deck, making such arrangements for the comfort of his people as his kindness and skill suggested. He then set forwards in a boat, manned by twenty of the ablest rowers, to explore the mouths of the river, and to discover the stream which his fleet might most

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safely follow. He returned ere the patience of his people utterly failed, and cheerily leading the way, brought his large family at length through every tortuous maze, fairly and freely upon the bosom of the wide swelling waters of the briny sea.

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CHAP. XI.

The sedgy growth of the river, and high banks of sand intercepted the prospect until the force of the current, almost suddenly, disgorged the Tsidonian fleet upon the tossing waves of the open sea. Ere any one was aware, the dreary levels were distanced, and an expanse of water surrounded the startled eye on every side.

A mingled cry of admiration and alarm broke from the crowd; all stood erect, eagerly staring around: even the experienced navigators of the river expressed undissembled astonishment. Children on tip-toe, or clinging in terror to their mothers, screamed to be raised that they might look upon the wonder. The elders fixed their eyes upon the Chief as if to ask—"Were you informed that this shoreless water was before us;—are you prepared to lead your people safely across this trackless billowy desert?"

To Tsidon, not less than to his people, the sight was new; but not as to them unexpected; nor was he unprovided with those rules of guidance of which, though yet untried, he had

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sedulously informed himself from the volumes of ancient learning.—His imagination too had long been familiar with the scenes of those remote times when men traversed fearlessly and far the moving plains of the mighty sea. An unceasing activity of command, an alert vigilance of observation, more even than was usual to him, marked at once the self-possession of the Chief, and his consciousness of having entered upon a field of new perils.—The life of the thousands of his people, centering upon his skill and care, seemed to animate his look and movements.

The river current had now carried the fleet far from the shore; and Tsidon summoned the whole vigour of his rowers to traverse the powerful flood, and to bring the vessels to the coast on the eastern side. A level beach within a sheltered gulf, invited disembarkation, and the spirits of the people were recalled by allowing them, ere night, to set foot once more on solid ground.

Slowly, cautiously, and with frequent encampments on shore, did the Chief conduct his people from point to point of the coast; ever avoiding the sea when darkened by a lowering sky; or when its waves rolled tumultuously upon the shore. Seldom did the gloomy land adown which the fleet was coasting, afford replenishments of grain

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or fruit; for with rare exceptions, during the months of the voyage, the recesses in which shelter was sought, exhibited only dreary plains or moving sand-hills; while the lofty headlands frowned upon the venturous Tsidonians, in horrid forms of black and naked precipices. Here and there, a slender silvery stream strayed from the inland heights to the sea, bringing in its course a narrow border of fertility and verdure, tufted with lofty palms.

Expectation and sickened hope had began to fail when, after passing a mountain promontory* of great height and gloomy aspect, the fleet entered a channel separating the main land from an extensive island, the valleys of which, so far as they could be descried from the ships, gladdened the eyes of the people by an abundance of spontaneous fruitfulness and verdure. During the five days in which these smiling recesses offered, every hour, a new promise of hope and pleasure, both old and young gazed silently upon the distant glades and groves; yet none asked—"May not this be the home of the homeless Tsidonians?"

During the night, the Chief had formed the fleet in close order, beneath a jutting headland; and at day-break, bringing his lofty galley in front of the array, the seven trumpets of general

* Gomberoon.

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command, blown shrill and long, called the rowers to their banks. Soon all was in movement; the frowning precipice was cleared, and the fleet suddenly came in sight of a small and rugged island, the towering and jagged peaks of which stood dark before the brightness of coming day.

"On to yonder level beach," cried the Chief. The shore, as the fleet approached it, displayed a soil of black and shining dust, abhorrent of vegetation, and dreary plains of naked rock. These were bounded by precipitous hills, the summits of which were white as snow in crystals of salt, and streaked, here and there, with sulphury veins, or iron ore, and broken by blocks of granite. Deep fissures, as if formed by the upheaving of a volcanic crust, ran from the shore to the heights. A single stream wandered down the shelving plain, tumbling from level to level: but its banks, instead of a verging greenness, were decked only, like the wintry torrent, with pendulous incrustations of salt.—Tsidon ran his galley upon the beach; leapt ashore, and turning towards the fleet exclaimed—

"Fathers and people, set your foot on the island of wealth and peace.—To this island of good hope Tsidon gives the name of his eldest son, and calls it Tsoor."

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Not shaken or depressed by the sadness which covered every face, the Chief with unusual gaiety, gave directions for the disembarkation of his people. A hard and level bottom invited the keel: before sun-set every vessel had been drawn up high upon the shore, or securely moored; and a town of ships, galleys, and barges, was formed, not incommodious, for the reception of the people until the labours of the builder could rear better homes. The galleys of the elders fronted a solid square, in the centre of which floated the banner of the Chief.

Tsidon did not long delay to open to the elders the reasons and the hopes of the project he had so far achieved. He led them—seventy in number, to a summit whence the whole island and the adjacent coasts might be surveyed. Here his attendants erected a spacious pavilion, open on all sides, and when all had arranged themselves in the accustomed order, he thus addressed them.—

"Fathers and peers in counsel—to this rock of desolation, yet commodious and secure, we bring the pregnant rudiments of future wealth. Here, if we fail not of our parts, we may find such happiness as nature permits to the Tsidonians. We bring with us the unabated vigour of our minds—

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our eminent knowledge, and practised skill in the arts;—we bring our restless activity and love of arduous enterprise;—and we bring the severity and simplicity of our manners; our love and habit of order; our love of each other, and not least, our good understanding of the principles of social combination.

"Quickly shall the black and arid space which shelves down from the foot of these rocks to the water's edge, be graced with homes of comfort, and crowded with the processes of industry.—These naked and hideous rocks shall give firm support to ramparts of marble, and to palaces and halls, resplendent with the works of a wise magnificence.—Think not that Tsidon, like a hunted beast of the forest, comes to seek shelter where he may, in a den of fear: he comes as a prince, nor will rest till the splendours of intelligence shine on every side of his abode.

"Behold our bulwarks: art scarcely needs to put her hand to the completion of our defences:—those dashing waves are our guards. Yonder verdant island, upon the valleys of which lately the people so wistfully gazed, shall soon, beneath the hand of toil, become a garden of fruitfulness and delight.—These shallow seas teem also with life—life for our sustenance. The dark hills of the opposite main are girt with forests, fit for every

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purpose of art; nor shall we fail, as I divine, to dig from their bowels the precious things of the earth.—Nay, the heights on which we stand are pregnant with iron—more precious than all gems to those who have skill to pass it through the furnace and the forge.

"Fathers and brethren, ye readily divine with what purpose it is that I have brought my people to this rock, rising from the bosom of the mighty waters.—These boundless waves shall bear us far to every shore, where we may meet our brethren of mankind. During the long years which have seen us serving the oppressor, they, more happy, have reached their lots. They have established themselves in their fair inheritances—have founded cities, spread tillage from river to river, and crept down to the margin of the sea. They have by this time, vanquished the rude obduracy of the soil—have expelled the beasts of the forest—have supplied the first wants of life, and even now, in the vague restlessness of satiety, are desiring things new, rare, and delicious.

"We shall visit then every shore; shall carry with us the various works of our industry—beautiful and useful; and with these purchase from every land what we find most precious or peculiar. Thus hastening to and fro, we shall obtain every where what nature has lavished, and supply

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what she has denied. In this exchange of things to which reason or caprice gives value, we shall find our wealth; and while we bless every land, shall abundantly enrich ourselves.

"Truth of dealing is our banner, and Peace our law. Far from the hearts of the Tsidonians be the guile that snatches at gain to the hurt of another; far from their hands the rapacity that is impatient of the slow methods of fair barter; far from their arms the eagerness that would hasten to gather the harvest of commerce by violence and wrong."

The more robust, or the less intelligent of the people, were drawn from the several families, and without loss of time established upon the adjacent green island, first to collect such spontaneous fruits as its valleys might afford, and then to bring into cultivation its fertile tracts for the future support of the community. Another party, more bold and active, crossed the channel, and proceeding towards the mountains, commenced the work of the axe, while others collected whatever might subserve the purposes of art. At the same time, a city, with its arsenals, harbours, and moles stretched its long lines of promise upon the beach, and far up towards the precipitous rocks. Masses of crystal salt,

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hewn by the mallet, supplied the place of brick and stone.

No sooner had a raft of timber reached the island, than the keels were laid of thirty ships, of larger dimensions and more substantial workmanship than any of those which the Tsidonians had hitherto seen. It was neither by the slow and fallible and vexatious process of experiment, failure, and gradual improvement upon rude commencements; nor by an adventurous effort of untaught invention, that the builders of these vessels attained success.—The perfected arts of an elder time had been transmitted, securely and in full detail, to this later age; and the Tsidonians, more than any other race, had been endowed with the precious lore of antiquity. During their subjection to the rule of Sabtecha they had added to their hereditary learning the skill and facility of practice, and not a few of them were well prepared, not merely to carry on successfully their accustomed labours, but to surmount new difficulties by the ready resources of the inventive faculty, informed by science.

The Tsidonian navigators, expert in transporting their vessels over-land, feared not to lay the keels, even of these larger structures, far from the margin of the sea, in a spot where they were sheltered from all storms. Three years

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gave completion to ten ships of war, and twenty vessels of burden. The first that swam was a galley of two hundred and fifty oars. Decked with flowers and embroidered draperies, it had been drawn to the verge of the rippling tide at the hour when the returning sea was fast creeping back upon its domain. Tsidon surveyed the finished work of his people, as it bore itself evenly upon the wave, with serene delight.—Though not less new to his eye than to theirs, it was familiar to his mind; and while the crowd gave utterance to their admiration in loud bursts of joy, he fixed his gaze upon the dancing vessel as if to assure himself of what he had never doubted—the truth and accuracy of the calculations upon which the structure had been effected.

To assure the courage of his people the Chief himself assumed the helm, while, at sound of trumpets, the galley darted forwards upon the open sea, and made the circuit of the island. The multitude climbing from steep to steep, followed its course, and at sun-set, with redoubled acclamations, hailed its return to the harbour.

A fleet of merchant vessels, in quick succession, took the sea; and ere long, fraught with articles of various industry, made their initial voyages: cloths of every fabric—implements of

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mechanic art and of domestic use—arms—armour —trinkets—pictures—statues; and silver, drawn from the neighbouring mountains, filled the adventurous barks. "The nations," said the Chief, "with whom we are about to open the intercourse of commerce, though themselves perhaps in some degree skilled in the arts, have not yet, as I deem, rivalled the Tsidonians in the products of ingenious toil. They will gladly receive from us these articles of use and pleasure in exchange for the spices, the gems, the gold, the dyes, the healing gums, which the special favours of heaven may have put into their hands. —These we shall collect from those fervent regions upon which the sun sheds his earliest and his most generative beams. We shall transport them to the farthest west, where wealth, the offspring of tillage, gives activity and keenness of desire to the caprices of every passion, and to the vague and vast demands of pride.—We stand, Tsidonians, upon the centre of the habitable earth—beneath the very eye of noon:—all nations will learn to look towards the island of Tsoor for whatever is precious."

The labours, enterprises, instructive disasters, and successes of a few years, realized the plans, and even surpassed the hopes of Tsidon. A

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numerous fleet, richly laden, crept annually along every coast, east and west of the island; while a hundred swift galleys of war, secured the empire of the sea and the safety of commerce, and imposed fear upon the lawless. But peace was the law of the Tsidonians. On no shore did they affect to arbitrate between rival states. No where did they set an encroaching foot upon territory; no where urge pretensions which might wound the pride of other nations. They asserted the dues of hospitality with manly firmness, but rather withdrew for ever from a churlish or unfriendly people, than returned to the coast where they had received insult and wrong—armed with the brand of vengeance.

"All men shall know," said the Chief, "that though traders and men of peace, we lack not courage when the rights of nature must be argued with the sword. But those will rarely be compelled to shed the blood of their fellows in whose hearts there lurks no ill intention of malice or cupidity."

On almost every shore, from the farthest islands of the eastern sea, where the sun is seen, with gigantic effort, bursting up from the abyss of shoreless waters; even to the dread promontory of mighty storms, towards the south and west—that promontory not to be doubled by mortals,

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the approach of the Tsidonian fleet was yearly hailed with glad and friendly acclamations. Even the industry and the cupidity of nations far buried in the depths of continents had began to converge towards those points of the coast where the articles of Tsidonian traffic were stored and exchanged. Every river brought down the products of the countries through which it flowed; and vast deserts of sand were traversed by companies of merchants, tempted by the gains of that traffic to which the industry of this people gave birth.

The whole fertile surface of the island of Fruits had been brought into cultivation;—colonies of labourers had been established among the mountains of the continent.—The new city, with its warehouses, arsenals, workshops, had spread itself over the level on the northern side of the island. Moles, affording shelter from all winds, had been projected from the rocks on several points; and every dangerous reef was marked by an admonitory tower.

Mansions, spacious, commodious, and modestly magnificent, graced each quarter of the city; and in these the elders and the rich held intercourse of hospitality with the people.—No space was left on which abject poverty might rear its hovels; for indigence, that fatal malady

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of the body politic, had not yet infected the Tsidonian commonwealth. Hitherto the more wealthy citizens, well informed of the prime and necessary principles of social order, had practically kept in view the truth that—Poverty, when it has become the condition of a class in the community—when it is other than the consequence of the improvidence, indolence, or peculiar misfortune of individuals;—when it affects the industrious not less severely than the idle, is at once the fault of the rich, and their plague—a plague that, in due time, shall visit the fair palaces of voluptuous revelry under some ghastly form of dread retribution.

"If the state be a machine," said the father of his people, "poverty is a rottenness in the works, that must bring slow or sudden disruption upon all the parts. If the state be a living body, then does the sympathy of disease pass inevitably from member to member. Neither law, nor force, can intercept the correspondence which shall at length convey the miseries of the ruinous hut wherein want hides its woes, to the halls of wrongful luxury. Selfishness is a blind vice, and grasps unknowing at its own destruction. Vainly does it strive to sever itself and its circle of trim indulgences from the sinking wretchedness of its neighbour. As well might

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the right hand regard with indifference a poisoned wound inflicted on the left. See you a stranger whom the winds have cast upon our island:—take heed that he falls not into penury anear our homes;—his welfare is our own; and though no kindness were to throb in our bosom, yet a *provident selfishness* would interpose in his behalf; for his wretchedness is of a highly contagious quality.—How much more certainly and fatally contagious would be the indigence of thousands of our brethren, were we to suffer thousands of them to fall into helpless want. The most perfect social system is the one, not in which either the haughty pretensions of the rich or the contumacious demands of the poor, take their freest course; but that, whatever its form of polity may be, wherein the law of universal sympathy exists in the fullest vigour."

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CHAP. XII.

Thus far Ebul Nisra. I opened the volumes of Tyrian history where the faithful chronicler of the times was performing a part of his duty deemed of the highest consequence to the instruction of posterity:—I mean, a description of the temper and qualities of the principal persons of the state. Every man who peruses the records of Melekartha may, on some page, find his image, and it is certain that no counsels of conduct are so apt or so efficacious, as those which burst upon conscience while one contemplates, in the mirror of history, faults, infirmities, and perversities, which at a glance the reader recognises to be specifically his own.

The senate-house occupied a rising ground in the centre of the city. The spacious hall in which the elders assembled offered no gay seductions to the sight:—the law of convenience prevailed, while, a modest elegance did her part. At the upper end was placed—neither elevated nor adorned—the chair of the Chief; and on either side those of his compeers in deliberation,

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who took place according to the immemorial precedency of the families of which they were the heads. In not rare instances it happened that by the death of seniors, a man, still in the first vigour of life, ascended the chair of patriarchal authority, and so obtained a seat in the council.

There was therefore heard in this chamber of conference, as well the daring and novel propositions of spirits warm with the freshness of youth, as the cautious and rigid decisions of age. While the one kind balanced and attempered the other, Tsidon in silent attention gathered the light of all minds, and ripened his determinations, which he imparted, or not, at his pleasure, to the elders, or to those of them whom he might call to his closet. His will was supreme and irresponsible—yet it reached not to alter or subvert the immemorial usages of the people.

In the esteem of Tsidon, if not in popular regard, not one of the seventy elders stood so high as Ahimal. Except that he wanted the bland benignity which rendered the Chief the object of his people's unbounded affection, he might on the ground of personal merit, have well competed for the first place of power. In truth no place but the first could have given play and developement to his high-born and aspiring

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soul. That largeness of comprehesion, perspicacity of foresight, and vigour of will, which impels a superior mind to propose to itself a distant object, and to pursue that object steadily, can hardly find employ with him who stands obsequiously at the right, or the left hand of sovereign power —to offer advice—advice that may be rejected.

Though a wish of lawless ambition never rested in the mind of Ahimal, yet, in discharging the duty of a subordinate rank he endured daily the vague tortures of intellectual confinement, restraint, obstruction;—those pains, unconfessed, which are the hard lot of great minds not blessed by fortune. Nature provides in every age and in every community, much more of talent than she uses:—the neglected residue wastes itself in the yearnings of unexhausted force—in the anguish of indefinite desire. Ahimal, careful ever to yield to the rightful possessor of power that deference which himself, in the same station, would have claimed, yet stooped with an air that was less than perfectly graceful or native. While advancing his opinion in the senate there was a rigidity, an awkwardness, which caused the eyes of those who listened to him to fix upon the ground. His tone was like that of one who stands up to offer an unsatisfactory apology for a breach of duty.

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Nevertheless there were rare occasions when, borne high upon the flood-tide of intellect, he forgot for a while, the chilling proprieties of inferior station, and poured forth the full eloquence of a soul conscious of no peer;—of a soul that could own no superior. Yet presently recollecting that he stood to offer advice, not to arbitrate — the wing of thought suddenly drooped; and as if smitten by a heartfelt misgiving, he prevented the applauses that must have burst from his colleagues, by some frozen formality that ill concealed his embarrassment.

Every restraint mulcts the understanding of its forces; and the consciousness of subjection so far obscured the luminous perceptions of Ahimal as served to save Tsidon—who better than any other appreciated his sagacity, from the humiliation of invariably adopting his advice.—Perturbed by the rebellious swellings of his high spirit, he marred the perfection of counsel by a warmth which himself, on reflection, reprobated. The Chief, who, from a sentence or two, gathered often all that he thought it behoved him to heed from many of the elders, listened always with profound attention to every word uttered by Ahimal;—listened, and with the utmost effort of his own perspicacious mind, separated from the gold the particles of alloy.

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Few—none but the most discriminating, would have named Gether as second to Ahimal. Never, when he rose in the senate, did he fail to shine: a stir and alacrity of attention murmured through the hall as his turn came to speak. Graceful, abundant, various, versatile, and sparkling, he was also grand in conception, and ever soared a height or two above the level of the matter in hand:—if this were mean he graced it by wit; if perplexing and dull, he enlivened it by ingenious illustrations; if great, he borrowed from it the rudiments of sublime and comprehensive speculations. Give him the task of recommending an impracticable project, and in his hands it would quickly assume a specious face of reason and probability. He almost invariably carried the acclamations and suffrages of the whole middle class in the assembly; but failed to convince those whose rate of intelligence placed them either above or below the range of eloquence. While Gether delivered his opinions, Tsidon, and a few with him, smiled and applauded, as they might have done at the performance of the bard who, at a royal banquet, earns by his wit a seat among princes.—Meanwhile plain men slept.

Delicate in conformation, the faculties of the mind broke beyond the limits which must not be

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transgressed if the integrity of manly strength and the soundness of manly judgment are to be preserved. With Gether, thought, instead of being the play of natural life in the brain, was its fever; and a reaction of the body upon the mind made him so far less than perfectly sane in counsel, as he was less than perfectly sound in health.

If charged, as he sometimes was, with the execution or superintendency of affairs, he ere long became embarrassed and hurried, and even expressed, before promiscuous hearers, anxiety for the issue of the business committed to his care. Though kind, even indulgent in temper, he often lost equanimity among inferior agents; hastily blamed their want of intelligence, or of fidelity;—imputed sinister motives to his colleagues and equals; and perhaps in the critical moment, when the public welfare demanded the prompt completion of the business in hand, he abandoned his charge in disgust.

"Our part," was Tsidon wont to say, "is to promote the prosperity of *the Tsidonians*. In doing so, let us carefully avoid inflicting injuries upon other nations. Nay, when occasion fairly serves, let us confer unpurchased benefits upon them. But *we* are not installed as administrators of the interests of mankind." This humble line contented not Gether, whose mind teemed with

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large projects of universal beneficence. Had *he* been chief, the island of Tsoor would have shone as a sun and centre of pregnant influence to all lands. He talked much of principles too great and expansive to admit of the selfishness of that ambiguous virtue called patriotism.—"What are the Tsidonians more than other people?"—"They are," replied the Chief, "perhaps not more or better than others; but they are the people for whose welfare Tsidon and his senate must care.—These schemes of yours belong to the gods, or to sages; not to statesmen."

By seniority, by gravity of character, and by experienced wisdom, Remmon held high consideration in the senate and among the people. Chief of the second family of the Tsidonian race, he had ruled his numerous household during a term of which very few now remembered the commencement. Men of the fifth generation did him service. Though he confessed, with promptness, the rightful supremacy of the head of the elder house, and made it matter of pride to be foremost in yielding submission to the will of the Chief, he did so with an air that spoke his sense of personal superiority:—he would have it thought that he bowed to the sceptre; not to the hand that held it.

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The stature of Remmon was scarcely less than gigantic; his form robust; his movements full of power: he repelled the attacks of time as a mass of rocks resists the dashing of the sea. His tread shook the earth; his out-stretched arm, when he gave command, trembled less than the limb of an oak: his brow, terrible to the youth and menials of his house, rarely relaxed its tension, even amid the revelries of a banquet; and from beneath the awful shade his fiery eye shot dismay into the hearts of his people. His wisdom was not the intuitive sagacity which some men possess as perfectly in the early as in the last stage of life; but rather the ripened and accumulated fruit of long and large experience. So great and various had been his knowledge of human affairs, and so much was he addicted to reflection, that his anticipations of futurity were little less infallible than the announcements of heaven. He spoke seldom in the senate; nor at any time descended upon the field of argument; nor ever added to the brief declaration of his advice, a single sentence that might serve to recommend it to the approval of others. It is hard to say whether he would not rather have witnessed the miscarriage of an enterprise, than patiently have demonstrated the false calculations of those whom he saw to be proceeding upon the hollow ground of fallacious hopes.

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But it is certain that the urgent and various affairs of a community are not to be put in movement by an engine so ponderous and so immobile as was the mind of Remmon. Even in the necessary business of his own house, the thousands of his people were more indebted for their actual prosperity to the silent and unauthorized management and zeal of a few faithful subalterns, than to his personal cares. Occasions arose every day in which the sons and servants of Remmon chose rather to incur the peril of his tremendous displeasure than to witness the damage and inconvenience that commonly attended their chief's tardy decisions.—Conscious of his fault in this respect, he connived at these well-intended and necessary encroachments upon the precincts of his prerogative; and in truth, the awful patriarch moved in his house more as a dread phantom of power, than as the actual administrator of government.

Hobab also had seen a multitude of days, and they had graced his head with the hoary honours of age.—The copious silver of his beard, and the still more resplendent locks which descended from his temples, seemed actually to shine as they flowed over the purple mantle in which his slender form was wrapped.—His trembling step invited aid; but did not diminish respect. He

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ruled his people with the mildness and indulgence of a nurse, and their correlative affection was a compound feeling, in which were blended the sensations of children towards both father and mother. The youth and infants of his house crowded his knees, and with upcast glistening eyes listened to his tales of other times, corroborative of many a pithy maxim of prudence.

The intelligence of Hobab had, in the passage of years, clustered or crystalized itself into axioms of pointed wisdom, which, if they failed to carry the full consent of the few, diffused among the many much of the substance of practical discretion. Better fitted to shine in the schools, or in the forum of the people, than in the senate, nevertheless there were occasions when he was listened to with favour, if not with profound respect.—He would bring forward some felicitous expedient in those perplexing conjunctures of domestic policy when it was necessary, by artifice, to divert the populace from their hasty caprice; or when a dangerous ebullition of feeling was to be thrown harmless in the air; or when a causeless dejection was to be dispelled; or when an agitator was to be circumvented in his projected mischief. In such seasons while stronger minds were depressed by doubt and alarm, Hobab rose gaily from his seat, and after a

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preliminary array of pertinent sayings—often heard before, would propound a course of proceeding to which Tsidon, with a hardly concealed smile of contempt, was fain to accede. Among the people the gentle elder had long enjoyed, as a personal cognomen, the epithet of 'the wise;' and his colleagues quarrelled not with the distinction; though wont, among themselves, to repeat it with an emphasis of sarcasm.

The senate contained but one man who could be deemed the antagonist of the Chief: this was Hammedatha, who, though destitute of a quality that should have entitled him to consideration, nevertheless found the means, by the glitter of unsubstantial virtues, to establish a sort of credit without the walls of the council, and even within them, which rendered his malignancy perplexing, if not dangerous. In those times, when some cloud hung low over the community; when the popular mind tossed itself in angry billows against the strength of the state; or when a sullen stillness, ominous of storms, filled the good with fear, and the licentious with hope, then it was that Hammedatha, with the gay alacrity of one who is just stepping upon the point of success, plied every art of bad ingenuity that might hurry on lawless change and confusion.

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If this personage had at all an excellence, it was that sort of animal courage which fits a man to leap thoughtlessly into the arms of desperate danger. He might, with high praise, have led a hopeless attack against a bristled fortress, or have brought an encompassed band through a host of foes. In fact he had, in early life, won the plaudits of Sabtecha, by some such exploit of hardy valour, during an expedition against the mountaineers. It seemed that the laurel then placed on his brows had suffused a delirium of ambition into his brain. Ever since he had believed himself born to empire; his dreams were of sceptres, and of prostrate crowds; and he practised kingly graces in secret.

The government of the house of which he had become the head, he contemned as too small a thing to occupy his cares; and in consequence of his utter neglect, disorders, extortions, oppressions, tumults, perpetually racked the quarters of his people; and often spreading on all sides, endangered the general peace. The passions of Hammedatha were, or seemed to be, in the last degree impetuous; yet no man could, better than he, assume the meekness of the dove, or sustain provocation unmoved, when the part he was acting demanded a display of temper and moderation. He scrupled not, in utter contempt of the

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usages of his rank, to mingle in the sports and revelries of the lowest of the people, and would covertly excite them to those mad excesses, which a wise ruler scarcely knows whether it be better to connive at or to punish.

In the senate, ordinarily, Hammedatha was grave, respectful, moderate:—he would favourably explain hasty expressions of personal dislike; arbitrate with conspicuous fairness between contending parties; and was ever obsequious to the less intelligent members of the council, whose whimsical or absurd advices he never failed to magnify with enormous flatteries; while in listening to the few superior men, he put forth an affectation of patient but fatigued attention. Whenever occasion served, whenever it might be done without flagrant offence, he would, in a tone of bleeding and powerless compassion, lament the sufferings of the common people, applaud their submissive endurance of intolerable burdens, and express his humble hope that the happy day might come when the chiefs, content at length with their swollen wealth and power, would find leisure to consult for the welfare of the sinking community.

Hammedatha was ready in perceiving, and expert in turning to the utmost advantage those difficult occasions, when the common and admitted principles of good government must be

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held in abeyance, or must bend to an exception, at the demand of a critical emergency. Then, as if suddenly inspired with the freedom and power, and fluency of virtue and intelligence, he overcame the natural awkwardness and poverty of his style, and poured forth a torrent of borrowed wisdom and eloquence. It was on such occasions that he succeeded in dispelling, at least for a time, and from the minds of the simple, those suspicions and dark imputations which hovered over his reputation. So speciously did he at such moments, assume the air of indignant virtue, and conscious rectitude, that a stranger who should then have entered the hall would have gone away exclaiming—"Alas! that in an assembly of seventy, one only should be wise and good!"

It was in such seasons of threatening anarchy, that Ahimal was seen to burst through restraints, and with magnanimous promptitude and terrible power to spring upon the factious spirit, snatching from its misgiving grasp, the brand of sedition, rending away its mask of virtue, and leaving it in the dust of conscious and declared guilt. These were the auspicious moments when that sympathy which ever subsists between the truly great, though it may lie latent, beamed forth in looks of generous complacency, interchanged between the two master minds of the senate, and

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brought Tsidon and Ahimal into the contact of cordial friendship.

The voice of Harushul, dread and deep, echoed but rarely in the senate-house; nor indeed did he ordinarily take his place among his peers. When he entered, it was in the midst of debate, and instead of assuming his seat, he either reclined against a column, with folded arms and eyes fixed on the ground; or paced the lower extremity of the hall, muttering indignant comments upon the harangues to which he seemed scarcely to listen. Indulgence was granted by the elders to the extravagances of their colleague.

Harushul was of slender form, and his stature was below the common standard. No limb could be blamed as tortuous or disproportioned, and yet the face and general appearance of the man were such as ordinarily belong to a deformed person. His large head, delicate hands, and wasted limbs, bespoke some deeply seated derangement of the system, which was indicated too, by the delirious glare of his dark eye. A complexion colourless, yet translucent as ivory, contrasted its livid clearness with a vast growth of entangled hair, black and sear, and intermingled with slender locks, perfectly white. He wrapped his slight form in a cloak of coarse cloth, never

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surrendered to the cares of the fuller.—Ancient men declared it had once been of a brilliant crimson; but who could now affirm what hue it had received from the dyer? Nevertheless, though so neglectful of ordinary proprieties, Harushul loaded his fingers, wrists, ankles, ears, neck, with rings, chains, wreaths;—various, costly, and all of potent efficacy to reveal secrets, to repel harms, or to inflict vengeance.

Harushul had never known the fondness of paternal love; for his father, on occasion of some casual offence, had been empaled by Sabtecha at his own door, three months before his wretched wife gave birth to this son. In the anguish of horror and despondency, she had shut herself up in a vault, where, during eighteen years, hating the sun, she nourished and nurtured her boy with bread of woe, and waters of terror. At the time of her death he had never once beheld the azure of heaven, or looked upon the green earth, or held converse with his fellows. Yet was he not altogether uninformed of the things of the world; but had learned them, in a shadowy manner as they might be learned, from the hollow voice of melancholy madness.

Force, not persuasion, at length dragged the wan youth from the sepulchre of his mother, and during seven years bars and bands only

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prevented his breaking away from the haunts of man, and joining himself to the wild tenants of the forest. But Harushul was heir to the supremacy of his house.—This right he had been informed of by his mother; but the fact, at first scarcely understood, by some accidental collision of circumstances, fell, like a spark upon the deep passions of his soul—kindled the life of reason, and quickened him, as in a moment, to the soundness of manly sense;—he ceased to be a maniac, and thenceforward beseemed himself with the dignity proper to his rank.

The young Harushul now applied himself with unremitted assiduity to the acquisition of science and ancient lore, fitting his station. As if exempted from the common necessity of sleep and repose, he passed long nights beneath the lamp of learning; and long days wandering alone far upon the plains of Euphrates. His manners to his people, except on rare occasions, were mildly indifferent; neither benign nor churlish:—the torrent of his indignant maledictions was directed only against those whom he deemed his equals:—the delinquencies of an inferior he saw not. He sought no one's friendship;—asked service of no one;—not of his domestics; proffered aid to no one. The men of his house prevented his wants and wishes, as they might have done those of a mute being of another

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species, and would as soon have thought of contending with the phantom of death, or with the prince of pestilence, as with their chief.

Yet Harushul ruled his household well: he forgot not his part, though seemingly forgetful of all things visible and palpable; but a single sentence, dense and well-considered, imparted a volume of necessary instructions to those accustomed to catch the pregnant significance of his words. Of such magic force is language, when it conveys the thoroughly digested ideas of one who incessantly cogitates!

The southern face of the island presented a wild assemblage of huge and precipitous rocks, uplifted high by volcanic force. The general disposition of these masses was into the form of an amphitheatre, or semi-circular range of mountains, enclosing a conical hill, of rather inferior elevation, which rose steeply from the sea. A deep and broken ravine, cut through by fissures, in the bottoms of which the gurgling of the rising and falling tide might be heard, divided the hill of vision (such was the name it acquired) from the neighbouring heights. These, dark, or of sulphury hue, were capped by snowy incrustations of salt, which here and there dipped fantastically below its common level, upon the face of the hills, and shone as if luminous upon their iron red, or sombre purple.

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The insulated hill of vision terminated in a level of small extent, which glistened throughout in the virgin purity of saline crystals. A deep chasm, sinking far down into the bowels of the mountain, nearly divided this elevated plain into two portions, except that, here and there, the branching incrustation from either brink met and formed natural bridges, by which a steady and fearless foot might pass from the eastern to the western side of the plain.

None but Harushul had dared to explore the recesses of the tortuous rent of the hill of vision: but this cavern was his retreat—the chosen home of his meditations. In its gloom, or on the snowy plain above, he spent nights and days of solitary contemplation, nor was ever disturbed by mortal visitant. From this summit might be seen, towards the west and south (and at sun-rise it looked like an emerald on a lady's bosom) the island of fruits—gay, green, sparkling with its frequent villages and mansions, encircled in dark groves:—the dancing surf edged the island with a silvery fringe. Towards the east the line of coast fronted a distant range of mountains. The boundless sea lay beneath the southern sun, which, at a single point dimly shone from the high promontory of the opposite Arabian continent.

The hill of vision could be approached only by

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a narrow pass, at the entrance of which Harushul had constructed a watch-tower and barrier, held always by his people. But even without this precaution, it is improbable that any Tsidonian would have dared to break in upon the dreaded precincts of the mysterious place.

When he set out on his way to this seclusion, his manner was like that of one whose mind is anxiously expectant of manifold and momentous affairs; and when he returned to the city, and to his functions as chief of a family, he seemed—not as if quitting meditative leisure to resume the busy employments of public life, but rather as if seeking repose after arduous efforts. No one imputed either affectation or sinister intentions to Harushul: no play of the lip, no glance of the eye, ever betrayed a wish to be gazed at and admired. Whatever might be the motives of conduct so extraordinary, they were assuredly genuine, and far raised above the level of vulgar vanity or ambition.

Nor was a savage ferocity, or brutal thirst of blood imputed to the gloomy elder, although, if ever he spoke in the senate, it was to assert the claims of stern justice or of vengeance; and unless counsels more moderate than his had prevailed, more than once or twice the life of a thousand of the people would have expiated the fault of

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a few; and not seldom the whole warlike force of the state would have been despatched to some distant shore, to inflict terrible retribution upon a city or village where a Tsidonian crew had happened to receive wrong or insult. Over-ruled or disregarded on these occasions, the wrathful Harushul, after uttering dire prognostics of calamity or fearful maledictions, hasted from the hall to the scene of his intercourse with invisible powers.

The youthful Tsoor, eldest son of Tsidon, and heir of his power, though he held no place in the senate, stood in the front of public affairs. Excelling his father in stature and graces of person, and not inferior to him in the qualities of the mind, he shone before the people as their star of hope in the morning sky of a distant and bright day. Among all the fine dispositions which rendered him the darling of the people, and the crown of emulation to the youth, the most conspicuous was a faultless and affectionate deference to his father. The son was, at once, the reflection of his father's virtues, and the living expression of his will. He would accept no praise which his sire and sovereign did not sanction or confer: he desired no esteem or admiration but such as tended to enhance the attachment of the

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people to his father's rule and person. He strove to win popular regard, not so much to Tsoor, as to the son of Tsidon.

The heart of Tsoor, as of Tsidon, was altogether the property of the community. Every man had his name and interests written upon its fleshy tablets:—no thought purely personal or selfish lodged there. Each lived for the Tsidonians. "If," said the father, "I were but the head of a private family, you would, not the less, yield me filial duty; were it only that you might teach your sons what, in your turn, you should demand from them. But, as son of the chief of the commonwealth, you labour that, from the pinnacle and splendid summit of supreme power, you may recommend to every house among the thousands of our people, the most necessary and the most auspicious of the social virtues—that virtue which is the spring and pledge of every other—the virtue of filial piety."

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CHAP. XIII.

The indulgence given by Tsidon to the foreign marriage of his younger son had not been revoked: nor did he withhold from his daughter, though a stranger, or from her children, the dues of paternal affection. Nevertheless the blameless Aia was now the only object that recalled to his mind the dark years of servitude; and the very effort which his sense of justice and his feelings of kindness prompted him to make to conceal the workings of less benignant sentiments, imparted to his manner a constraint which did not escape the quick discernment of his daughter, and which her keen sensations rendered the source of sadness to her heart.

And though to have been torn from Asmel would have been death, or worse than death, to Aia; to be torn, and for ever, from her father's house, was a wound not to be healed — neither by time, nor by the fondness of her husband, nor the caresses of her children. Her parents, her brethren—whether they still lived, or were no

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more, she knew not, and could never know! to have wept their death would have been happiness compared with the torturing ignorance of their weal or woe. Aia, therefore, was sad among the happy.

And the popular jealousy which, for a moment, had given way to a better emotion when the disconsolate wife and mother was welcomed to the bosom of her adopted people, had returned in a measure, and fixed its sinister eye upon the guiltless and guileless heads of her sons. The ruddy youths, fairer than the children of the people among whom they had been received, were shunned and excluded from the companionship of their fellows, and compelled to seek their amusements at home.

Asmel too, though a true son of Tsidon in goodness of heart and nobleness of temper, loved not the contestations and rivalries of public life; and though he could dauntlessly confront the lion or the boar, he shrunk from the field of popular commotion; and would gladly escape even from the approving acclamations of the multitude. Tsidon, who well knew the qualities and aptness of every member of his house, found for his modest son a happy and not dishonourable retreat in the island of fruits, where he was appointed to wield an easy sceptre of deputed authority.

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An agricultural people asks only not to be vexed by intolerable oppressions, and they are easily governed. Nature, their kind mistress, sheds daily contentment into their hearts. Leave them to bright skies, green fields, untainted gales, hopeful toils; and they scarcely need know that authority bears a sword. A sullen, a licentious, a seditious peasantry, speaks of horrible misrule, and extortion. A garden, a field of tillage, and a hill-side of flocks and herds, is the home of man. Happy those whose lot it is, in that home of health and virtue, to breathe out tranquil days, and there to die! Happy, supposing always that the hand of statute rapine grasps not the fig, the olive, the date, the cluster, the sheaf, leaving to the labourer barely the husk, the chaff, the refuse, of his vineyard and of his field.

Every valley of the island of fruits now smiled under the hand of the cultivator:—its glens and slopes were decked with the lowly dwellings of the husbandman, who, though not rich, was nourished with a fair sufficiency of bread, and possessed a hope for the winter of life. Abodes, somewhat more spacious and ornate, yet unostentatious, occupied by those who, by right of the wealth they brought with them, owned or farmed

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allotments of the soil, graced each favoured spot, and each breathing eminence. But while the gradations of rank, of property, and of enjoyment, were freely admitted, no man in the island was destitute of a little precinct, safe from invasion, on which hope might fix its eye, nor be compelled to look wistfully upon the possessions of another. He who holds not so much as this, who has nothing but his life that he may deem his own, call him by what term you may, is a slave—and being a slave is a wretch—a woe to himself—a bane to the state—and an infallible omen of blood, overthrow and confusion!

In his rural palace of vicegerency Asmel was happy, both as it was the home of domestic peace, and the centre of mild and beneficent rule. And he was happy in the field, where the labourer blessed him; and happy also in frequent hours of secluded meditation, upon the bare hill-top, or in bowery and fragrant recesses, where he conversed serenely with his heart.

"Bear me witness, my Aia," said he, "and bear me witness, my children, my servants, my people, that I seek and love seclusion, not because I love not my fellows, or am content to sleep in the lap of ease, while others suffer or labour uncared for.

"But it is true that, as there is a wisdom of

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action, of enterprise, of achievement; a wisdom of the senate, of the forum, and of the crowded ways of business — so is there also a wisdom of meditation, reached only in retirement, and gathered beneath the azure or the starry vault of heaven, and culled from the flowery lap of earth; and heard in the hum of insects, the song of birds, the bleating of flocks. It is true, she shows not the path to power, or wealth, or noised pre-eminence. Yet she points to a happiness that may be enjoyed on every hill-side where a home of love can be reared.

"Nor does this meditative wisdom fail to claim even a much loftier praise than that of conferring tranquil content and smiling peace. For if, indeed, as is taught by the sages whose ancient doctrine was, in an evil day, renounced by the elders; and if, indeed, as is often whispered to the heart in the silence of night, man be born from the skies; if, indeed, the Highest be his father; and if he shall survive to exult over the earthly frame that drops into the tomb;—then may the wisdom of meditation challenge to herself the honour of leading him who courts her into an anticipated converse with the greatness of his future destiny.

"And if Asmel must yet excuse the seclusion which he loves, let it furthermore be said, that,

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as upon one man are conferred the graces and talents of high command, fitting him by every word and gesture, to enchant, and subdue, and persuade the eyes, and ears, and hearts of the multitude; so to another are given those qualities which, though not despicable or common, are not at all to be appreciated, or indeed discerned, much less favoured and courted, by the vulgar. A man so gifted, though he be one of a thousand, or of ten thousand, in power of comprehension, or in elevation of sentiment, or in fineness of fancy, will inevitably be thought of in the crowd as less than the least among the competitors for honour and fame. And such a one, conscious, painfully, of the injustice he suffers daily from those who meet and scorn him, stands in perpetual danger of becoming sullen, churlish, or resentful; and thinking himself to have a personal quarrel with the world, will harbour a grudge against it; and from being neglected wrongfully, will fall into a state of feeling which justifies the contempt or hostility of mankind. Such a man does well to retire from the crowd to the home of domestic familiarity, where his qualities are known, and where rude and noisy arrogance never disputes his merit."

Asmel compensated to his sons for their exclusion from the excitements of public life by

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committing early to their care certain responsibilities in his government of the island; and he taught them hilarity, fortitude, and audacity, amid privations and dangers, by leading them often a-field in pursuit of the wild boar and the wolf. "A man," said he to the three graceful youths who followed him, "may be happy without either mantle of office or staff of command; but not without health, courage, and good humour: and all these must be sought abroad—and sought there laboriously."

Yet if the meditative son of Tsidon had been asked what was the centre and prime element of his peaceful bliss, he would have said, the love of her whom, from early youth, and whom only, he had loved. Unlike most of the chiefs of his race, he remained the husband of one wife:—he loved but one; or rather, *he only* loved; for that passion asks another name which may be shared among several, or which may be transferred from object to object.

Aia possessed entire the soul of her husband; and she would rather have held that possession than have listened to the adulation of princes. She gave him in return, what none can give who gives with a rival by her side, her warm and gentle heart, an unreserved, unbribed, gratuity. She delighted, as did her husband, in the beauty

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of fields, and woods, and streams, and the trim garden; but she saw all as by reflection from the mind of him for whom she lived; and she knew herself ever to be the mirror in which he contemplated the loveliness of nature. "Tell me, Asmel! were it nothing better than a fond, foolish jealousy, that would rend my heart if you loved another? Should I not, along with my selfish grief, lament for you that you had thrown away a bliss which none but the faithful can taste?"

Near to the centre of the island, and on its western side, a long and irregular valley, commencing at the margin of the sea, runs up to the hills, and terminates in an area, shut in on both sides and behind by an acclivitous half-circle of rugged summits. Several slender streams trickle down the steeps, and uniting ere they have flowed far, form a rivulet which tumbles from plat to plat, till it gives its freshness, at a bound, to the salt sea. It was in the centre of this grassy and secluded area, that Asmel had erected his palace, if indeed a term conveying ideas of pride and profusion may with any propriety be applied to an abode of tranquil, unobtrusive simplicity. A long line of buildings, of a single story, not rigidly uniform, stretched across the level, and

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the humble front was shaded, not obscured, by the palm, the plantain, the mulberry. An open elastic lawn invited the dance; and here on many a day of remitted labour, the people, old and young, met to spend jocund hours of temperate mirth beneath the eye of him who was most happy to see others so.

On ordinary days few sounds but those of the sports of children — sounds well accordant with the stillness of morn or evening, broke echo from the hills. Asmel loved to live "where he could listen to nature;" for from her voice he received always lessons of order and benignity; and sometimes vague whispers of immortality and unearthly perfection.

Once in every year this valley of peace resounded with the acclamations of almost the entire Tsidonian people, and shone with the gay splendours of princely state; for so often Tsidon, and the chiefs of the people, with a numerous train of citizens of all classes, visited the green island, and received from the vicegerent the honours of rural and festive hospitality. Pavilions covered the lawn; tents were erected on every surrounding level; and here the two portions of the people met for a brief season of jocund friendship. The one portion, simple-hearted, rude in manners, and frankly gay, offered

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amusements to the other; who, boisterous as children broken loose from restraint, exulted in their release from narrow spaces, sordid toils, and saddening cares. When at length they bid each other farewell, those who saw their guests depart, blessed themselves in thinking that it was *their* lot to breathe untainted gales amid groves and fields; while those who returned to the city, scarcely sighed to leave even a garden of pleasures, where minds irritated, and relaxed by artificial excitements, would quickly have fallen a prey to listlessness. Man must be born and reared in the silent bosom of nature to be happy there. But how happy is he who there is happy!

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CHAP. XIV.

The Tsidonians had now become known to almost every people as the purchasers and venders of whatever was most precious in art or nature; and every where the cargoes of their annual fleets met a ready sale. But on no shores were their visits looked for with more avidity, than on the western side of the Arabian Gulf, where the merchants of Egypt took, without question or reserve, whatever might be offered to their purchase; — spices, aromatics, dyes, silks, embroideries, pearls, diamonds, and works of art, in brass, iron, or marble. A large proportion of the Tsidonian trade took this destination; and a numerous fleet yearly braved the rocks and shoals and deep waters of that difficult inland sea.

Hitherto this gainful commerce had met no considerable obstruction. But at length the rebellion of a chief, holding a government between the principal cities of Egypt and the ports of the gulf, occasioned a sudden and

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entire interruption to the course of trade. The rebel, strong in the attachment of a rude and warlike people, and himself regardless of the adornments and delicacies of luxurious life, had intercepted the path of the merchants, thinking that by depriving the palaces and temples of their baubles, their perfumes, and their spices, he should more effectually than in any other manner, compel the sovereign, at the instigation of voluptuous nobles and priests, to acknowledge his independence.

The news of this event—sudden and unexpected, spread dismay through the island. The chiefs concealed but imperfectly the gloom that brooded on their hearts. The implements of labour fell from the desponding hand of industry. Complaints, suspicions, grudges—quick offspring of fear, filled the city, and seemed ready to burst forth into clamours of sedition. Hammedatha traversed the town, and as he passed from street to street, in the quarters of the common people, whetted their discontent or swelled their alarms. Relaxed from their ordinary employments, the people were grouped in every corner, and stood gaping for the lies of fear and faction; or repeating them. To these ready listeners he spoke, in hasty, half intelligible phrase, of misrule, negligence, or ill intention, where least it

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had been suspected;—of wasteful expenditure, and of selfish aggrandisements; and he repeated a sagacious prediction, long before uttered by himself (and which some professed to remember) purporting all that had actually occurred, which might have been prevented had it not been for the pertinacity, alas! of one high in power.

While gloom and discontent still loured over the city, a vessel entered the harbour, which had been separated from the lately returned fleet, in a hurricane, and was deemed to have been lost. The commander, leaping from his ship's side among the crowd, urged his way to the palace, and, unwashen and disordered, presented himself before the Chief.

Meanwhile his men had spread among the crowd the fragments of better tidings; but these, distorted, exaggerated, and then doubted, had almost been lost among the rumours they had generated, when the anxious people were authentically informed, that the ship just arrived had, by the violence of the winds, been driven far to the north of the point which hitherto had bounded the voyages of the Tsidonians; and had been hospitably and gladly received at a port still under the rule of the Egyptian king, and where the Tsidonians and their trade needed no introduction. The news of the arrival of this

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vessel had been transmitted to the seat of government, to which, afterwards, the Tsidonian commander had been summoned, and where he was entrusted with an invitation to send an embassy on the part of the Tsidonians, for the purpose of establishing, on a more sure and permanent ground, the friendly and lucrative intercourse that so long had subsisted between the two people.

The master described before the senate, and among the people, in magnific terms, the splendour of the Egyptian court, the wealth of the people, their prodigious public works, and the teeming fertility of the country. Curiosity, thus awakened and stimulated by cupidity, filled every imagination with gorgeous hopes of new and unbounded gains, when once the Tsidonian commerce should meet, in full current, the opulence and luxurious desires of Egypt. The pulse of life returned in vigour to the veins of industry and enterprise; and ere the sun had recalled the glitter of his fruitless beams from the crystal peaks of the island, every man had dreamed his own dream of coming prosperity.

Tsidon appointed Tsoor to the management of this important mission to the Egyptian king. Seven experienced elders were to attend him, and to advise his youthful tongue; and a nume-

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rous array of attendants was to exhibit no mean sample of the wealth of the Tsidonians. The swellings of paternal affection were subdued by the Chief, who thus dismissed for a long and perilous voyage a son so dear. The son, pained also at the separation, yet affected not to disguise the boundings of his joy in setting out on a journey so fully fraught with hope.

Beside that the rank of the prince and the graces of his manners would command respect and ensure favour, he possessed that perspicacity of mind, and that energy of good sense, and that quick comprehension of intricate affairs, which, in the opinion of his father, were better qualifications for the business of negotiation than all the wily wisdom of hoary simulation.

Both as a present to the chief of the Tsidonians, and as an attestation of the message committed to the ship-master, the Egyptian king had removed from his neck, and delivered to his care, a sumptuous pectoral. This gorgeous decoration was in the form of the horned moon: a chain of wreathed gold connected the points of the crescent, and by this it was sustained on the neck. The body of the work consisted of fine linen, folded in an infinitude of various plaits—regular as the ribs of the infant leaf, just bursting from its sheath. Embroideries

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of rich colours formed concentric semicircles upon the snowy, fleaky substance, and each brilliant curve was knotted into twelve portions by bunches of diamonds, emeralds, and pearls. Tsidon, averse to the encumbrance of regal finery, committed the splendid article to the care of the beautiful Astartha, daughter of Ahimal, and the destined bride of Tsoor.

Preparations were quickly completed for the departure of the embassy; and the hour of high flood was fixed for its leaving the port. Many an audacious wave threw itself, sudden and large, upon the marble ramparts of the harbour, scattering the eager crowd that pressed on every space whence the auspicious departure of the prince might be witnessed.

At the extremity of the harbour a pavilion had been erected on a platform of such a height as to be on a level with the deck of the lofty galley in which Tsoor was to sail. Cables on every side restrained the heavings of the vessel in near contiguity to the floor of the pavilion, so that the timorous foot of woman might pass from the one to the other. Beneath the canopy stood the Chief, surrounded by many of the elders: on his arm hung the trembling Astartha, whose hand her father grasped. The youthful hope of the Tsidonians, simply attired as commander of a

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galley, had taken his position. By usage he might not leave the stage of command when once he had assumed it for directing the departure of his vessel. Tsidon therefore, drawing from his girdle the silver staff of delegated power, held it towards Ahimal, to be placed by him in the hands of the prince; but his daughter, with the momentary boldness of true love, seized the bright ensign, and with a graceful bound springing upon the deck, presented it to the man of her heart, and as quickly returned to the arms of her father.

The thousands of the people shook the air with acclamations of joy and loyalty; but hushed when the Chief uplifted his hand as about to speak:—"Son! return beneath a sky as bright as this, when you have well served your sovereign, and achieved prosperity for his people and yours."

As he finished, a screaming voice from the midst of the crowd exclaimed,—"Tsoor returns never to the island of Tsoor." Quest was made, but in vain, for the ominous being who had uttered the dismal prediction: it smote the heart of the people with a chilly terror; and they failed in the effort, again and again renewed, to raise the echoes of joy as the galleys of the embassy distanced the harbour.

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Many repaired to the heights, whence they watched the progress of the fleet until sun-set. Astartha, with her maids, found a secluded shelter, high on a southern rock, where she passed not only the remaining hours of day, but the night, and at sun-rise believed that she still discerned, beneath the heights of the opposite coast, the red banner of Tsoor.

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CHAP. XV.

THE temperament of the Tsidonian race seemed specifically adapted to the climate of the island upon which the Chief had established his people. The fervent heat that oppressed and enfeebled other men, did but fire the energy of these. They exulted, they broke forth into buoyant hilarity — into mirth, bursting with laughter, beneath the insufferable fervour of their cloudless days. Children and youths, bare-headed, gambled over the burning rocks, when the sun poured from the vertex of heaven the flames of a furnace. The labourer, alert as the antelope, gave his sinewy strength to his burden, as if he were nourished and cheered by the intensity of the solar influence; and trembling age solaced its decays in the plenitude of warmth. The stranger who set foot upon the island at the noon hour of a summer's day, exclaimed, as he gazed upon the busy crowd — "Surely man, though degenerated in other climates, is child of the sun, and finds the perfection of his

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existence only where he finds the highest temperature."

Hitherto the sages of medicine had found little employment or honour in the islands of the Tsidonians; nor were the occult virtues of plants or minerals much in esteem. But there were coming upon the teeming city sad months of languor and death. On the very first days of the fervent season which succeeded the departure of the embassy to Egypt, the heavens, instead of their wonted azure—an azure deep and brilliant from the zenith to the horizon, showed a murky hue, as if discoloured by the smoke of furnaces. No breeze from the sea freshened the night: the night was sultry as the day. The sun, forerun by no silvery dawn, burst rayless and lurid from the east; frowned through his course; was pale at noon, and went down sudden, without leaving a glory to declare at what point he had parted from the upper skies. The night put forth scarcely a star; but flickering meteors climbed slowly to the zenith, and shrunk instantaneous down to earth: or blazing bands, breaking from the blackness of the skies, swept from south to north, flinging a bloody splendour upon the house-tops of the city, and upon the crystal summits of the rocks; and then with deep roar, parting in a thousand shivers of

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fire, again left the world to darkness and to fear.

The people gazed on these portents rather with listless and silent dejection, than with the vivacity of terror. Languor of body and apathy of mind oppressed all. The most robust fainted beneath the ordinary burdens of the day. Men of rank and high bearing confessed a base misgiving of the heart—an ungirding of courage and virtue. No one performed his part: the business of state, as well as of trade, was intermitted. The servant forgot his duty, and his master rebuked not his negligence. Nor was it long before disease broke forth, and death following hard upon it.

Men fell in stupor on the public ways; and languishing where they fell, died unattended, and were left unburied to offend the stagnant air. The streets were thronged by those who, in terror of contagion, had left their homes, where their relatives were sick or had died; and not knowing whither they went, roamed about thoughtless of food. Phrenzy seized not a few, who, rending themselves away from the feeble restraints that had held them while at home, ran on and on, over the rocky plain, piteously demanding water to allay the torment of thirst; or hastening to the heights, threw themselves headlong into the sea.

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The pestilence was no respecter of rank;—palaces were desolated, and men whom the people were wont to look upon with reverence, were seen rushing unclad, through the streets; or just sickening with disease, driven from their mansions by their menials. Orphan children, screaming for food, or lamenting over the putrid remains of their parents, filled the city with piteous sounds of sorrow.

At the same time licence took its range of loathsome gratification. Those who bore up against the power of disease seized the occasion to glut appetite, unreproved, as if resolved to taste to-day every pleasure, not knowing but that to-morrow might drag them for ever from the joys of sense. Woe and revelry, moans and shouts of drunken joy, mingled their incongruous sounds in every street.—Death and Lust, hand in hand, ruled the city.

The Chief languished.—Nevertheless, by energy of soul, and by zeal for his people's welfare, he contended and wrestled against the forces of disease: and though, in the conflict, the body became powerless, the spirit struggled to hold the seat of reason; and held it. Hourly he listened to intelligence of the progress of the malady, and the fate and conduct of the people; and issued commands

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to put in activity such means as he could devise for their relief, and for the repression of disorder. But it was only in part that these intentions were carried into effect; for many of his faithful ministers were already removed from their places.

At first the people would have rushed to the adjacent island, or to the continent; but it was found that the wide circle of the pestilence included both land and sea, far and near. Even the green valleys of the island of fruits, and its hills of health, were not less fatal to man than the crowded alleys of the city. The poison brooded upon the mighty waters;—ships on their return to port floated ungoverned near the land, or drifted on the rocks—their decks burdened with the corrupted bodies of those who, though returned from a long absence to their native island, should see their homes no more.

In the midst of desolation, dismay, confusion, Harushul, unhurt of the malady, untouched by languor, and fearless of harm, walked through the city, as if in covenant with death. There was vigour in his step, alacrity in his mien: he looked from side to side, on every spectacle of woe, and stared in dead men's faces, like one who, on a morning of spring, paces the trim walks of a garden; and stops, and turns,

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and gazes; and knows not which most to admire, the lily, the tulip, or the rose.

Not that Harushul delighted malignantly in the miseries of men;—hatred was not the element or moving spring of his nature. But his soul hungered for horrors as its proper aliment; and now, for the first time, he took a satiety of the excitement of terror. Raised to the happy pitch of full life, and revelling in an abundance of the nutriment his spirit needed, he no longer hung his head dejected, or knit his brows in gloomy discontent, or hid his face in his cowl, or, with murky glance, shot wrathful looks at the trembling passenger:—all this had been his manner in gay noon, at jocund banquets, and in the concourse of the happy and the busy. Now no more did he spend days and nights upon the hill of vision, but passed his time in the thickest haunts of the people; and slept kindly slumbers in the public places, surrounded by crowds of those who feared to return to their homes, where their relatives lay unburied.

By the death or sickness of many of the chiefs, and by the languor of Tsidon, Harushul was left, in a manner, sole master of the people; and in this season of their despair gained great ascendency among them. Instead of shunning, as formerly, his path, they thronged around him,

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pursued his steps from quarter to quarter, cried to him for help, and seemed to believe that their fates were in his hand. The number of his followers daily increased, until, at length, almost all who remained unsmitten by the pestilence, moved in his train from dawn to sunset. Aghast, trembling, and vaguely seeking they knew not what, the people went on, exclaiming, "Harushul! where goes he?—What will he do for us?—What says the Elder—the man of vision?"

He held no continued discourse with the crowd; but from time to time, as he passed up and down among them, repeated, in a calm, suppressed voice, the words "Blood! blood! blood for the life of the people!—The Dread Prince will not slake his tongue but with blood!"

The pestilence slackened not its ravages; multitudes perished daily, either by the shaft of disease, or by their own desperation in the delirium of intolerable thirst. Every flowing of the tide bequeathed to the rocks, and to the harbour, the swollen bodies of those who had shortened the anguish of death by leaping into the sea. Some indeed recovered from the malady; but of these the greater part had lost for ever the integrity of reason, and now were seen hurrying through the streets, laughing aloud, and uttering screams of

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convulsive mirth. Some stood like statues in the midst of the way, with open mouth and glazed eye, staring, and seeing nothing. Some fearlessly walked the ridges and parapets of the houses, or with an agility more than human, and as if pursued by an invisible foe, climbed and leaped from roof to roof unhurt.

The Chief, though now he had vanquished the force of the disease, still lay helpless on his couch, attended by a small number of his household and guards; but these were too few to attempt the repression of the general disorder. Tsidon received however full information of whatever took place in the city, and the conduct and expressions of Harushul, failed not to suggest to him the fear that some dark purpose of horror brooded in the mind of the gloomy Elder.

With the hope of turning him from his purpose, by authority, by persuasion, or by artifice, he despatched a messenger bearing these words—"Tsidon would confer with Harushul concerning the welfare of the people."

The summons, heard by the crowd of his followers, ministered to the self-importance of the Elder, and though he received it without returning even a nod of acquiescence, and continued through the day to perambulate the city as he had been wont, he failed not in the midwatch of the

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night to repair to the palace. Without asking leave of entrance from the porters, or heeding the cautions of the attendants, who, in truth, feared to interrupt his progress, he burst into the presence of Tsidon, and rudely broke his sleep, the sleep of convalescence, by a loud exclamation — "Harushul is here to confer with Tsidon concerning the safety of the people!"

Languishing as a man, yet stedfast in purpose as guardian and ruler of his people, the Chief soon collected his thoughts, and raising himself on his bed, prepared to employ that guileful skill of which even the noblest and the wisest of men must avail himself, when it is his misfortune to lie prostrate beneath the foot of a lion, a madman, or a fool.

The couch of the royal invalid occupied the centre of a spacious open area on the roof of the palace;—a low balustrade skirted the space whence, even at this midnight hour, might be discerned, far on every side, the city, the harbour, and, dimly in the distant south, the spectre-like peaks of the island. The glimmer of a single lamp, placed on the marble pavement at the foot of the couch, feebly contended with the obscurity of night.

"Brother and peer in counsel," said Tsidon, "afford the hand of healthful advice to the Chief,

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who, himself smitten with the common malady, mourns the destruction of his people. Death, quick of step, and voracious, walks up and down through the city, like the furtive intruder upon a neighbour's vineyard, who hastily gorges the ripest clusters.—Say, then, Elder! versed as you are in the counsels of invisible powers, how must we avert the sword of the destroyer?"

"Sword of the destroyer!—Ah, already has the dread Prince with whom Harushul holds colloquy, sealed his victims;—every son and daughter of the Tsidonians is his victim! Harushul—the man of piercing sight—the man whose eye is quickened, sees the red finger-mark of fate on every forehead of the people.—Every soul of our tribes must die!—The islands of Tsoor and Tsidon shall be void of life.—The vulture even shall move her brood from the rock;—the rock shall send back upon the shore no echo of mirth, no echo of toil;—these palaces shall crumble into dust;—and the mariner of a future time, storm-driven upon yonder reefs, shall ask, but not learn, "Who were the men that perished among these ruins?"

"Not so—not so, Harushul;—the wrath of heaven, does it not relent? Even the anger of

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man, vengeful as he is, has its hour, and softens; much rather the anger of the Highest—though justly offended."

"Yes, Tsidon! the wrath *of Heaven* relents—and relents oftimes unappeased. But not so the fury of the dread princes that hold dominion in the air, and thence, from their cloudy seats of power—power usurped or permitted—rule the fates of men. *These* go back never unbribed from their purpose of revenge."

"How, then, prevail to appease them?"

"Think not to trifle with the strong and the wise.—Tsidon! fraught with wily wisdom, I divine your inmost thought:—vain devices! those you have now to do with are not to be beguiled like the worms of earth, whom you govern and cajole! But come, make trial of your petty briberies! Offer now to the dread Molec, Prince of myriads, a garland of spring flowers—and a song;—give him a basket of figs—and a prayer;—bring him a kid—a heifer—a bull;—burn much frankincense beneath his nostrils, with myrrh and many fragrant gums! Scorns he not the trick? Come then with a thousand of the herd; stain the dust far and wide with brute blood, and bring forth

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the treasures of wine and of oil! Knows not the quick senses of the angry Molec to discern betwixt blood and blood? Is the curdling crimson the same, flow it whence it may? Ah! trifle not thus with the dread Prince, now in his surly mood of vengeance. He will have the life of all the people, or will take in lieu, no grudging ransom of blood; blood that dances in the veins of young joy—that throbs now in the soft bosom of hope and love—that shall fail from the cheek and lip in terror of the knife—that, as it gushes from the severed vein, shall recoil to the heart in horror of the unknown abyss of death:—such is the blood that must divert the vengeance of the dread Prince of the powers of air!"

"But has not the vengeful Malignant already filled his arms with the slain of my people?—May not these suffice?"

"Trifle not, Tsidon, with the strong and the wise! Think you then he will lap the cold and putrid humours of a corpse? or loves he the relish of disease? No;—the young, the sound in flesh, and these pampered to his liking, and vigorous to put forth in full stream the warmth of life, must feel the knife of his ministers."

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"Go, then, Harushul, ask the terms precise of remitted pestilence; and remember to deal for our people as favourably as you may."

"I go, Tsidon. But remember you to hold to the covenant."

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CHAP. XVI.

WITHOUT having explicitly invited their services or required their obsequious attendance, Harushul had now drawn around him a body of men who called themselves his ministers and disciples. Among these were some youths of strong passions and feebler reason, whom the terrors of the plague, or the loss of relatives, had driven to a state of phrenzied despair, or of murky melancholy, and who, in the society of the mysterious Elder, had well nigh lost all sense of the ordinary sympathies of humanity, and amid the terrible apparitions of their own and of his distempered imagination, no longer discerned any object in its real colours or proportions.

There were also in his train some—and such are never hard to be found in a crowded city—who, by native ferocity, and by the perpetration of many crimes, had acquired an appetite for horrors and cruelties—an appetite vehement as the hunger of a tiger. These men—although

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Harushul had not declared to them his purpose, hovered near him, as if by an instinctive attraction, or a fore-scent of his design. Just so the vulture, descrying the knife beneath the cloak of the murderer, wheels her expectant flight with patient assiduity over his midnight path.

And some there were among his followers, who, though less lofty in spirit than their master, had conversed so long with the illusions of a clouded fancy, and had so much convinced themselves of the reality of every horrible or magnific dream of a fevered brain, that they had become fired with a spiritual ambition to share in the offices and dignities which they believed might be obtained, through favour of their chief, from the invisible rulers of an invisible empire. Among these might be reckoned a few, who, while pursuing the mysteries of nature beside the furnace and the alembic, had learned, after first tampering with the credulity of the ignorant, at length to delude themselves not less effectively, by professing to hold command over the elements, by the aid of obsequious hosts of spiritual beings.

These persons, gathering his will from some brief intimations, had assumed a distinguishing attire, consisting of a scanty tunic of yellow linen, confined by a scarlet girdle, from which hung a broad double-edged knife, a cubit in length.

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At midnight of the fifth day after his late conference with the Chief, Harushul, attended by his ministers, four of whom bore him on a couch, broke again into the palace. Tsidon received the formidable band, of whose approach his people had given him timely notice, in the hall of state; and he had taken care to be surrounded by all his guards that remained capable of service.

The bodily strength and haughty spirit of the Elder, if not impaired by some extraordinary efforts or sufferings which he had passed through in the interval, had, at least, failed under excessive and long continued excitement. He seemed scarcely capable of movement, even on his bed; his look was feebly wild, his cheek hollow, his eye dim, and his voice subdued almost to a plaintive tone. He directed his bearers to place his couch close to that of Tsidon; and then rallying his forces, leaned forwards, as if willing to be heard in a whisper.

"And how has Harushul sped? What tidings from the hill of vision are brought by the man favoured of the dread powers of the air?"

"Heavy tidings for thee and thy people, Tsidon," replied Harushul, whose feeble voice and dejected manner gave weight and reality to the communi-

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cation he was about to make. Not now, as heretofore, sullen, arrogant, swollen with fantastic pride, and inflated with magnific dreams, he seemed to be subdued to the sobriety of reason, and softened to a perception of common sympathies, as if he had seen or heard what had effectually dispersed the illusions of his former life.

"Say, Harushul, what is the demand of Molec?"

"Ah, Chief! speak not of the dread Power in that tone of levity! But what need of these guards? my words are for the ear of Tsidon."

"Nay, what need of these knife-bearing attendants of a man guarded by the gods? Send your followers to their homes, and my guards shall keep the gates below."

Harushul gave the nod to his disciples, who reluctantly withdrew. Tsidon directed his guards to see them beyond the barriers of the palace, and themselves to remain without.

"Yes, but ere your people go," abruptly exclaimed the Elder, "let them kindle more lights; this hall is vast and dim; ah, kindle many lights; the spirit of Harushul clings feebly to the things of sense, as if fain to flit from the body. Tsidon—

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brother! sovereign! grasp my hands, and I will speak."

The Chief perceived that the Elder had too long surrendered himself to the impressions of his own prodigious imagination, and that if his insanity had abated of its violence and pride, it had only gained in depth and force; he sought, though with little hope of success, to turn him altogether from the subject of his visit, and from the track of his thoughts. But the kind endeavour was fruitless; no other ideas could gain, even for a moment his ear; and in a whisper of languishing dismay, he thus proceeded:

"Full of the arrogance of blind pride — oh, how *blind* a passion is pride in man!—I went, as aforetime, to the hill of vision. I ascended alone to the cavern; my people held the barrier, as they have been wont; and there they waited my return, from sunset till dawn, and till noon, and through another night; and then, fearing that the common malady had seized me, or that some other harm had befallen me, they broke their interdiction, ascended to the hill-top, and there found their chief, motionless as in death. Their cares restored me to consciousness; I awoke in my chamber; and how did memory, fraught with terrors, rush back to its seat! But hear me.—

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"—Hear truth—Tsidon—man of earth! Have you not, on the mountain side, looked up, and against the white cloud, seen flitting by, dark and innumerable, the flakes of snow? Have you not stood in the forest when the earliest hurricane of winter rushes on, rending the sear leafage from every bough, and driving the decayed beauty of summer amain? Have you not sat musing beside a stagnant lake, on a sultry evening, and gazed upon the swarms that darken the twilight—countless, countless myriads! and each rife with sense, each having his fate, his passions, his history? So, crowded with beings, conscious and knowing like ourselves, are all the broad spaces and unmeasured regions of upper air; and they have their orders, their supremacies, their princes. Absolute is the sway, irresistible the word of the mighty ones!—Tell me not that your fleshly sight discerns none of these forms—sees nothing but the fair azure; by day freckled with fleecy clouds, by night set with stars. These senses of the body—this sight, this hearing, this joyous converse with things palpable;—this flesh, with its powers, is but a curtain dropped between the soul and the great world of real existence.—These sockets of vision, these caverns of sound, are points of sensation, whereunto the spirit, itself percipient throughout, and quick and sensitive

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of nature, is bound down and limited. A mote i' the eye hides the sun and all the gay world. But now only sever the cord of bodily life, and instantly the spirit sees, hears, feels, without let or ceasing; and sees and hears what men dream not of. But hear me tell of things more true than the gewgaws of kingly pride; more substantial than these palace walls—than those rocks of adamant.—

"—I climbed the hill of vision—I proceeded, as I am wont to do, to the deep cavern of meditation. Know you the rent? it winds far into the bowels of the mountain:—the way then straitens, and by a low passage entrance is had into a natural hall—spacious, it may be, as this—or larger. Yet is it roofless;—the moon and the stars look into it, through the gasping fissure that severs the hill-top. But how is the vast chamber furnished—how is it paved?—

"—On that dark day when, as you have learned from the ancients, the waters of wrath came flooding up upon all the earth, it happened—for there was a populous city on the main, with which then this island was one;—that the people, frighted and desperate, fled from their high halls and temples, looked for refuge towards these heights, and ran;—thousands—tens of thousands ran;—they ran from noon—if

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on that gloomy day there was a noon—till sunset. The children, the feeble, the aged, fell soon by the way, and were swept into the flood. But the strong, and those whom terror of death made strong, ran till they reached the foot of the hill, thinking to climb to its summit; but as they skirted the base, on the narrow ridge, there came down instant from the skies—not rain—not torrents of rain; but cataracts of water.—Hundreds, beaten from their slippery footing, tumbled headlong down the precipice. But the foremost, who had now reached the mouth of the cavern, wild with dismay, entered for shelter, and were followed and driven onwards by the urgent crowd behind.—They passed, crowding and crushing each other, into the central chamber. More and more pressed in, the men of greatest strength climbed the rugged sides of the cavern, until every ledge and crevice, high up towards the distant opening, was occupied.—There, on the third day, the rising waters found them:—there all drank death:—and there, thick as autumn leaves that the eddying winds have borne into the pit which the shepherd has dug for the wolf in the forest, there are their bones:—the bottom is as if paved with skulls:—bones and skulls are on every ledge; bones and skulls fill every crevice. Such is the

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chamber of meditation to which none of the living but Harushul has ever penetrated; and thus is it furnished.—

"A block of granite—a natural throne, stands near the furthest side of the cavern. I sat me down there, for that is my seat of meditation, and placed my lamp on a ledge of the rock, and opened a volume—one that my mother gave to my bosom as she died—a volume of the learning of the ancient world—and read.—

"Ere long there passed over the mouth of the roofless cavern, as it were the deafening voice of millions in eager converse:—as they sped on the wings of the wind, they wrangled, muttered, raged, laughed, in loud peals, and uttered screams and yells—such as is the din and outcry when the lions, wild dogs, hyænas, bears, wolves, of a province, encircled by the hunters, are driven by fire on all sides into the pit, promiscuous, of rage and fear. The noise failed, or seemed to float far to the north.

"When silence had returned awhile, a voice;—shall I say that it was loud or whispering? neither; but strong like the rushing of the tempest through the thickets of a ravine in the mountains;—a voice as of one that leaned down far into the cavern from above said—'Man of vision!—favoured of the gods, come up, come up!'

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"My blood curdled:—again the voice, as if straining still lower down, repeated the words—'Come up, come up!' and added, 'the dread Prince holds his court on the hills to-night:—his hosts are about him, come up, come up!' Though not loud, so did the voice by its depth and power shake the sides of the cavern, that the skulls and bones, dislodged from the shelves and ridges of the rock, came clattering down, and split and dashed their blanched fragments far on the bottom.

"Upborne, as in strong arms, I rose through the craggy fissure, and was left on the crystal plain.—I lay supine. The sky showed, as it has of late, a murky—vapourish, starless face: ere long, as I gazed upwards, there began to come out, at this point and at that of the dark expanse;—just as the stars came out in the twilight;—dim fronts, and forms of limbs; confused, and dull of colour; but various in hue, like the surface of an autumn forest, seen by the moonlight. Every moment more and more came out, in the void spaces:—at length every interstice had a face, a figure; and the whole heavens, from north to south—from west to east, racked to and fro with life.

"At every point, every instant, a new form came forth, struggling, and hurrying, and look-

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ing down, and disappearing;—as if there were myriads, far more than could at once come fronting towards the earth, even upon the surface of all the skies: and all were urging and pressing down to gaze, a moment, in their turn, upon a spectacle of gorgeous greatness. Just so, when a royal band, in sumptuous array, sits in the gate of a city, the million throng the narrow space, and using their rude strength amain, get sight, in turn, of the bevy of princes.

"Forgetful even of fear, I gazed upwards, until suddenly, I know not by what impulse, I turned towards the range of mountains that, as you know, bend their lofty circle around the hill of vision. Yes, the sides and summits were occupied!—How do the shepherds, when they have driven their flocks to the well's mouth at even, lounge upon a grassy slope until their fellows be come up? So were the steeps and tops of the mountains filled with the mighty! Sons of power! tall as the clouds! Each was seen by the crimson light of his own spiritual substance, gleaming and gushing out from between the joints of his harness, and the folds of his cloak.—So the sparkling intensity of the founder's fire beams forth from every gaping fissure of the belted brick-work that shuts in the ore and the coal.

"You ask, were they gay and glad, like princes

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on a festal morning—gazed at, and acclaimed by the people? Yes—gay; but gay and sad; or gay as a troop of rebels, destined to the stake, that go pale, but jeering in resolute contempt, to meet the writhings of death.

"Think not that I tell you of unsubstantial apparitions—airy images, such as float before the fancy of a phrenzied man.—A vision—a feverish horror, hath not sharpness of outline, distinctness of persons, clear colours, proportioned forms, deliberate movements, reasonable discourse, beginning, middle, and fit issue, as had the things seen and heard by Harushul upon the hill of vision. Where the dread sons of power sat, their proper shadows stretched adown the crystal sides of the hill; where they rested their hands, where they planted their spears, the splinters of salt crumbled and fell bounding down into the depth of the ravine. When they stamped with their feet, the hill of vision shook;—shook as do the walls of a city when a thousand chariots of iron hasten out to the war.

"In the centre sat one statelier than his fellows.—I will speak of him anon. Behind him stood, on the highest of the peaks, the bearer of his banner.—When the tempest has rent the broad sail of a galley from its hold of the loops below, and it rages and flouts from the yard far

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in the wind, smiting the storm—so did the banner of the mighty fling its breadth across the night.—It floated towards the city, and once and again the bearer, mustering his strength, shook it amain, as the charioteer gaily cracks his thongs at the sky.—Each time a shower of pestilent drops was scattered from it, and fell like a rain of gore upon every house-top; and each time, he gained breath and cried,—'Break out, break out, venom of plagues, upon the people of Tsidon!'

"But I will set forth in order the persons and semblances of the mighty ones."

"Enough, enough!" exclaimed the Chief; "tell me, in few words, what is the ransom of the people."

"Hear, then, the demand of the dread Prince. He asks, for the redemption of thy people, the warm blood of threescore and ten youths, one for each tribe;—and the sacred knife of his ministers must draw the tax from the bosom of the victims."

"Go, Harushul, to the hill of vision—and tell the vengeful Molec that Tsidon refuses the blood of his children, and defies his malice.—And for yourself and your followers, remember, that the

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guardian of his people's lives will hold as a murderer, whoever spills, or attempts to spill, the blood of the innocent."

Harushul started aghast. Tsidon summoned his guards, who conveyed the Elder forth to his attendants.

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CHAP. XVII.

The followers of Harushul failed not to learn from him what he had told to Tsidon;—and even more. While he lay exhausted and feeble in his mansion, they spread themselves through the city, and each, in his manner, with unsparing exaggeration, diffused among the people these new elements of horror. Every ear caught the infection of ghostly fear. — The miseries of mere disease were forgotten.—The wrath of the dread Prince, and his demand of blood, filled every mind. — Every voice, almost, exclaimed—"Give the ransom." The streets, by day and night, resounded with the cry—"Give the ransom."

A tumultuous crowd followed the knife-armed ministers of Molec, who, as they stalked along, uttered, in dolorous symphony, the cry—"Blood, blood of expiation, to quench the thirst of Molec!" The sick crawled from their beds to the windows and doors, and thrusting forth their ghastly visages, echoed, in shrill screams, the words—"Give the ransom."

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Chemsheoul—a wretch sanguinary and horrid by fault of birth, and sanguinary and horrid by practice of crimes, who from the first had followed Harushul—now proclaimed himself the chief minister of his master.—On pretext of instructions received from the Elder, who could no longer appear in public, he hastened the necessary measures for accomplishing the fatal wishes of the people. The name of every family of each tribe, inscribed on a shell, was thrown into a vase; and the seventy vases, so filled, were ranged in a circle in the centre of the largest area in the city: hither were congregated all who now remained unsmitten by the pestilence. Chemsheoul stood in the midst of the vases of redemption;—a menial, at his beck, dipped into the first, and drawing forth a shell, pronounced the name it bore.—

An old man, followed by the surviving members of his household, tottered forwards. "Already," said the elder, "has the plague nearly extinguished the light of my house, which lately shone fair as any in our tribe. Scarcely one of my sons or daughters of ripe age survives to prop my decay;—here are those of the young buds of the stock of the wretched Harmel that remain unsmitten:—Priest, which take you?"

Chemsheoul challenged to himself the right of

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selecting the individual victims from each family upon which the lot of death should fall;—for he pretended alone to know the taste of the fell divinity. The youths of the house of Harmel being drawn out in a line, this chief minister of Molec stood awhile, perusing the group before him:—he stood, one foot advanced, the finger planted on the cheek-bone, and his right hand resting, by the thumb, on the hilt of the consecrated blade that hung in his girdle. As his grey eye glanced up and down the line, each shrunk and shuddered. At length, bounding forwards, he clenched his grasp in the copious tresses of a youth just touching upon manhood — dragged him, struggling and reluctant, within the circle, where he was bound and held in charge by the other ministers of the god.

Ere noon the work of the lot was completed, and the band of youths devoted to death, and dragged from the arms of now repentant affection, was led away to the house of Chemsheoul, there to be pampered five days for the knife of expiation.

During this interval, preparations were made with busy zeal for achieving the sanguinary ransom of the people. An accomplished artisan, with his band of assistants, ascended one of the rocky precipices which overhang the space

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between the city and the mountains. Its summit was capped by a stupendous unconnected mass, poised, as it were, upon a needle's point, so as to threaten a fall in every gust of wind. Ingredients, known only to those most deeply versed in the secrets of Tsidonian art—ingredients of forceful combustion—emulous of the thunders of heaven, were deposited beneath the ponderous cube;—a spark filled the sky with the sudden flame and smoke of a volcano; and a deafening echo rang long among the heights. Ere the spectators had regained the power of sight, the mass, bounding from ledge to ledge, had already traversed the plain beneath, and rested in its place.

The diligent hammers of twenty workmen soon excavated the upper surface of the block, so as to form a vast cup or cistern, from whence a channel, or bore, was formed to convey the fluid contents into a brazen cauldron placed beneath, and ample enough to slake the thirst of fifty oxen.

An altar of rude stones, twenty cubits in each dimension, was reared in front of the stone of sacrifice, and this was to receive the bodies of the victims, there to gorge the vulture.

At dawn of the sixth—the destined day, the people, in wild expectation, crowded the ground

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around the stone of sacrifice;—each tribe held itself apart by an intervening space, for each separately was to offer its own victim for its redemption from pestilence. As the sun rose, the priests of Molec moved in solemn state from the abode of their leader, who, gladsome as the husbandman that brushes with his early feet the dew of the morning, stalked in front of the procession. The victims, bound and decked with trappings, were led on in a line in the midst of the sacerdotal ranks.

Harushul, consenting, as if impelled by dire necessity, but not *acting* in these preparations, had been borne in his litter, and placed at some little distance on the right side of the stone. As the band of priests, with their victims, came up, he reared himself suddenly from his bed, and turned towards the group with a look of quelled, smothered agony. It had happened that a young daughter of his tribe—the only being upon whom he had ever bestowed, or from whom received, the caresses of fondness—who had ministered to him in his sickness, and amused him by her vivacities, had been singled out by Chemsheoul, who, ignorant of her near relationship to his master, had been attracted by the peculiar grace of her form, to devote her to the god: and the haughty Elder, either in the sternness of pride, or in

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sincere dread of the vengeance of the divinity; or perhaps from a politic fear of disgusting the people, had refrained from using his power to rescue the darling from the clutches of his savage minister.

This child, worn and exhausted by days and nights of weeping and of horror, was now borne, half lifeless, in the arms of a priest:—she hung her head, graced with an abundance of ringlets, low over his shoulder, while her arms, as if not knowing whether her bearer were most a foe or friend, slackly encircled his neck. The man was himself a father; and with an involuntary and sorrowful energy of pity, clasped her tightly to his bosom—a bosom more infatuated by superstition, than cruel.

A sudden burst of mingled groans and shouts from the people, as the victims approached the stone of death, awakened the child from her torpor;—she raised her head, and looking hastily from side to side, presently discerned the Chief, from whose fondness she had been torn. Instantly—convulsively, and with a strength more than that of a child, she burst from the misgiving arms of the man who carried her, and ere any one could interpose, had flung herself upon the neck of Harushul, and, with screams and sobs, hid her face in his bosom.

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Chemsheoul, maddened by thirst of blood, forgot every impulse but that of a tiger's rage, and, regardless of the respect he owed to his chief, darted forwards, knife in hand, to drag the innocent from her place of refuge.—

—A loud voice — the voice as of one accustomed to speak in no other tone than that of authority, exclaimed—"What!—does the minister of the divinity forget, or not know, the immutable law of sacrifice — a law ancient as the gods — that if the victim once breaks from the hand of the priest, the rites must be stayed, until it be ascertained wherefore the god rejects the offering brought to his altar by the worshipper?"

He who thus spoke, spoke no more; nor could be found in the crowd; but the mind and purpose of the people was shaken. Murmurs ran tumultuous from side to side; and the priests, yet young in their work, and doubtful of the popular feeling, feared to proceed. Chemsheoul stood at bay, as the wolf which the shepherds have surprised with the lamb untorn beneath his paw. Harushul faintly and feignedly thrust his darling from her grasp.

In this moment of suspense, the crowd was suddenly reft by an armed and peremptory band

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of guards; and Tsidon, borne in his litter, reached the place of sacrifice. He had rallied all his returning strength, and strong besides for the occasion, in the power of virtuous anger, he leaped from his bed, as a man in the plenitude of health. It could scarcely be perceived that he had been weakened by disease. As he placed himself in view of his people, every eye fell to the ground, smitten by fear and shame: yet every bosom, or every bosom not foul with purpose of murder, heaved with new hopes of deliverance and comfort.

"Bind the wretch Chemsheoul," said the Chief to his guards.—"Wretch!—For many crimes unpunished, and for murder attempted on this spot—die!"

The bearer of the axe of public vengeance, by a single effort of felicitous force, severed the horrid head from the trunk. The multitude breathed an unspoken assent to the stroke of justice; and as they gazed upon the lifeless monster of cruelty, seemed at once to return to their lost consciousness of right and wrong.

"Elder and peer in counsel," said the Chief, turning to Harushul, "Choose whither you will go:—take with you your substance, and lead with you your deluded followers; but leave for ever the islands of Tṣidon and of Tṣoor."

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"Children," continued he, addressing the people, "Already the heavens show a brighter hue. The kindly sun returns to our skies with a clear and healthful fervour. I have learned, and tell you with joy, that the force of the pestilence is spent.—Each day fewer of my people die than the day preceding;—multitudes of the sick are returning to life. Go, then, my sons—hasten to purify your homes, and to bury the dead;—and bury them with religious decency, and every usual rite. Yes, go and appease the righteous anger of heaven—righteous, yet placable—by a swift and hearty return to every path of justice, truth, kindness, mercy, temperance.—Those that have done evil—and who has not?—let them do so no more. But if victims must bleed, let us not think to expiate faults by crimes, or with unnatural hands drag the innocency of youth to the altar of sacrifice. Rather let us bring hither such as High Heaven abhors—such as by their vices contaminate the social body, and by their crimes disturb its repose;—yes, let the murderer die—as this wretch has died—by the stroke of swift-handed justice; and let the nightly depredator die, who fills a thousand homes of peace and industry with terror; and let the perjured die, and the fraudulent, who fatten on the bread of widows and orphans; and let the adulterer

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die, who sheds a mortal venom into the very spring-head of human happiness. These be our victims. — Benignant Heaven smiles upon the stroke that pours forth the blood of an evil doer.

"The brain-stricken Harushul, and his deluded and infuriated followers, have indeed spoken in your affrighted ears of the wrath of Molec—malignant Power! Be it so, that herein he has not uttered idle fables, or mere dreams. Be it so, that, as ancient tradition tells us, celestial giants, long ago hurled from high thrones far down into the region of winds and storms, reign there, by a permitted usurpation, and often, while rushing from north to south upon the hurricane, shed from their wings, upon the abodes of man, the poison of pestilence; or, brooding upon the still vapours of a sultry night, replenish all the air with mists of death. What though these things be true—and I neither say they are true, nor affirm them to be false; yet, my children, be not disquieted, much less impelled by fears, such as darkness favours, to crimes whereat the day must blush.

"Who does not know that, even in the happiest and best ordered house there will be—an obdurate son, or a faithless servant? Much more shall there be found, in every numerous commu-

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nity, however well governed — men of violence, who are neither to be ruled by love, nor reclaimed by correction. — Such, notwithstanding the vigilance of the Prince, find occasion, often, of effecting grievous mischief. And may it not be so, even in the celestial regions? But mark me;—how do we deal with such despisers of law? Do we cower to them;—do we bribe them;—do we pamper them with gifts, or vilify ourselves by offering to them adulation, which themselves must know to be false and foul? No! no! If we cannot utterly dispel them from the state, yet we think of them always as enemies—we hate their wickedness — avoid their company — and even if, at any time, we feel ourselves in their grasp, yet defy their malice, and scorn to purchase their mercy by any sort of flattery or worship.

" Thus—thus, my children, ever deem of those ghostly powers of whom Harushul, and men of his stamp, are wont to speak. Heed no more the threats of any such spiritual Malignants. Ah, rather love, fear, and obey the Supreme Beneficence! Yes, my sons, look cheerfully upwards to the skies—crowded as they are with fountains of unsullied light. — And look abroad upon the earth — replenished as it is with the manifold gratuities of intelligent Goodness! Are there not, I ask, on every side, tokens enough of the

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presence of a Benignant Power? And is not that Power—however sometimes seemingly thwarted, yet manifestly sovereign and triumphant? Draw your inference whence you will.—The sun, comes he not forth daily with the punctual diligence of a faithful minister, bringing copious help for all creatures? Fails he ever so much as a moment of his promised return? at any time is he beaten from the skies by hostile force, or held prisoner in the chambers of night, while we wonder at his stay? The high way on which he holds his gladsome course, I ask, is it frequented by any ruffian violence that has power to let him in his journey? Or the hosts of night, that wheel their wide circles around the steady pole—when have ye seen them stagger or fall back, or cluster their legions in dismay, as if driven to contend for their rightful passage across the plains of heaven by some opposite array of war?

"Or look, my children, to the pregnant grain buried in the earth, and decaying to-day—to-morrow bursting from its tomb!—Not here and there, or once and again, do these things happen, as by chance, but in common and constant course the tender and fragile blade severs the stiffened clod, as if emboldened, beyond its nature, by warrant of Omnipotence—and hastens to claim acquaintance with the sun, and speedily clothes

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its greenness in strength, and crowns its strength with fruitfulness, and, in the appointed season, yields its wealth gladly to the garners of man! Will ye ask then—Where is the Benignant;—or if he rule sovereign in the world?

"—Or turn to the wilderness—to the wide places of the pathless forest, where man has no inheritance. Look at the thousand and ten thousand living columns, clad year by year in new mantles of greenness, and, age after age, towering to the skies, unscathed of any malice:—or look rather to the countless blossoms that make the grass of the desert gay: are they crushed nightly beneath the scorching feet of malign legions? Or if indeed the air be peopled with any such ferocious hosts as ye have heard of, surely their power of mischief is chained; for see you not the lark which, in those very fields of air, greets the morning, as though no ill were in all the skies; while beneath her flight, myriads that almost escape our vision, blithe, and thoughtless of harm, wanton in the beams of day! Say, then, my people, is not the Benignant anear us, and is He not declared to be Sovereign and Supreme;—Master of the world, and Victor of every hostile power? Away then with the doctrine that would teach us to do homage to his foes and ours!"

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CHAP. XVIII.

HARUSHUL prepared himself to obey the commands of the Chief. The malady had now disappeared, and the people, while they mourned their lost relatives, returned with bounding alacrity to the path of prosperous industry. Busy and joyous amid the comforts which industry procures, they were little disposed to give heed again to any terrifying rumours, brought from the hill of vision; or to the vindictive predictions wherewith the seer and his followers revenged their sentence of exile.

And yet there were some—here and there one in a family—whose spirits had been conquered irretrievably by the doctrine of Harushul, and could no more burst the chains of ghostly horror. These saw with discontent the banishment of the man whom they deemed to be supernaturally favoured; and they harboured a vehement grudge against the Chief, whose will, guided, as they thought, by *earthly* wisdom, had removed from the people the commissioned interpreter of the

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behests of invisible powers. When the galley that conveyed the banished Elder to the continent left the island, these malcontents sat melancholy on the rocks till sunset, watching its course, and many of them solemnly affirmed that, when night had hidden the gewgaws of the world from view, the distant bark of Harushul shone luminous from afar upon the skirts of the dark sea; and that though so distant, every part of the ship—the mast, the yards, the cordage, the ensign, the streamers, and every joint, and every loop, and nail, and bolt, gleamed out distinctly with a silvery brightness. So the gay gnat, with his thready wings, and gamboling antlers, and trailing wiry legs, shines in the last beam of day, as he sports at the mouth of some deep cavern.

The choice was offered to the disciples of the exiled seer, either to follow him in perpetual banishment, or to remain at home, and never again to talk of his doctrine, or observe his institutions. Of the whole number that had assumed the sacerdotal dress, thirty only adopted the first alternative; while the residue, already purged of the infatuations of fear, quietly fell back upon their places in the ranks of ignoble cares, joys, and toils; nor were ever pleased to be reminded that they had once shorn their heads, walked

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barefoot through the city, and vowed perpetual celibacy.

On the eve of his departure from the island, the Elder assembled the whole number of his disciples in a spacious subterranean hall beneath his mansion, where, as he lay supine, and motionless as a corpse, on a low bier, he held to them, in a still calm voice, the following discourse:—

"Out with the false flaunts of day;—out with the dreams of noon;—out with the hurries of the world! Come darkness—good nurse of the spirit: come damps and chills of that deep pit where death hoards his gettings:—come heavy mists of that large gulf where unbodied souls wheel endless rounds of fear and sadness. Thus shall Harushul, the man of favoured vision, fitly converse with his sons.

"Brethren and sons! favoured also by high powers;—favoured to catch glimpses of the invisible!—Tsidon, the man of earth, though he means not so, has done kindly in driving us from this island of traffic and sensual joy;—from the throng of commerce; from the tinklings of gaiety; from the din of toil, of industry—foolish name. Even could we, by prostrate supplication, gain from him a grudged leave to stay, neither Harushul, nor the men who have drank of his doctrine, could any longer breathe the dense, corrupted air

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of this island of sordid labours and intemperate joys.

"Come away, then, with me; come away, every spirit lofty and pure; come, live the life of the soul!—I go to penetrate the depth of a forest never yet broken by the huntsman's foot; a forest encircling a terrible solitude of naked rocks:—there, in a cavern of princely amplitude—(Harushul, on unearthly wing, has visited the place)—shall we find shelter and a home. More than enough of grains and roots to satisfy the desires of abstemious meditation shall be furnished by the untilled wastes around us:—crabbed fruits, fit to afflict the gross wantonness of the body; cold and bitter bulbs, poisonous to pampered stomachs, shall well sustain us. Far from us be the labours of husbandry, or any other toil; far the thought of gain; far every care and wish of this life;—far, more than all, woman—spring of shame to man; and far pity, fear, love, hope, desire; far every passion earthly, every turbulence that racks the lower nature!

"See ye not, my sons, how the children of earth are tossed ever upon tempests of passion, are thrown upon shoals of sorrow, by hurricanes of chance, are wrecked daily upon rocks of destruction?—See them weep and laugh—as babes,

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all within a twinkling of time. They know nothing of the greatness or of the peace of impassible abstraction; and suffer hourly the torments of perpetual incertitude.

"Not so the wise; not so those who have made friendship with the mighty of a higher sphere! Such, uplifted far above the troubled region of sensual delight, or bodily pain; and severed, by force of meditation, from the world of things visible, palpable, audible; look down serene upon the eddies of vulgar life.—Not more serene is the summit of the mountain, cloaked in eternal snow, and basking in perpetual sunshine.

"Yet think not that a life so high, so pure, can subsist amid the levities of a common lot. Think not that the man who carouses at jovial boards, who dips his fingers in dainties, who quaffs cup upon cup, who jests and sings;—or the man who haggles in the market; or he who sweats at the forge—the man whose brow is knit with care for the bread of to-morrow; think not that the man who reposes on the lap of rosy joys, or who dallies with beauty, and takes and gives gentle caresses;—think not that the man who dandles his infant sons, who smiles upon a home, and hugs his comforts;—think not that such can live the life of the spirit, or hold converse with fiery powers of high places, or pretend to thrones

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and seats of office, among the princes of the air!

"Harushul and his sons walk on another course than that of the herd of men: his soul drinks a nobler ambition than to be monarch of a thousand cities; — poor, poor glories of kingly state — set out with sparkling pebbles, burnished metals, flimsy silks! Ah, the abject worshippers of royal finery, and kings themselves, deem not of the pomps celestial that nightly move in long array across the skies; — deem not of splendours in front of which the sun would sicken;—deem not of forces greater than the force of mountains falling from the moon; deem not of intelligence greater even than the force it wields. — Such is the fellowship of Harushul, the man favoured of the mighty. — Come, then, partake of his honours."

The elders of the state, and the Chief himself, with a multitude of the people, witnessed the departure of Harushul and his followers. He sternly refused, for himself and them, to carry with him any thing save their scanty attire, and sacerdotal knives.—Borne in the arms of four of his people, he was carried on board the galley, and his thirty ministers, without a word of parting salutation to their relatives, or a look towards

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their homes, or the least notice of the crowd, passed with slow step, one by one, from the pier to the deck of the vessel, where they ranged themselves in a semicircle, behind their master.

As the cable loosened, Harushul raised himself from his bed, and in a tone which, though not loud, was, by its depth and clearness, heard afar, thus spoke:—

"Chief of the Tsidonians! you stopped me rudely when I would have reported to you the words of the dread Prince whom I serve.—'Enough, enough!' you said.—Yet now hear so much more than at that time you would listen to, as may be fitting for you, and your colleagues, and your people to know.—Know, then, that the vengeful power, whom you despise and defy, defrauded by you of his demand, whets a sword, even now, that shall draw plenty of blood from young Tsidonian hearts. To-day, while his servant is driven from among you — to-day is he gathering his hosts from many hills and plains. A black cloud of war hurtles on all the mountains, and shall burst in torrents of death upon the islands of Tsoor and Tsidon. But—'enough, enough!' Chief! learn the fate and wanderings of thy people!"

Thus saying, the exiled Elder, who had grasped

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a napkin of fine linen in his hand—a napkin rent and spotted with blood, raised it high above his head—held it a moment at the utmost reach of his withered arm, and then gave it to the winds. An angry gust, breaking down from the rocks, and eddying around the harbour, bore it aloft. The flimsy portent, unfurled by the air, flared hither and thither awhile, as if doubtful of the course it should take. Now it seemed about to fall upon shore, and again mounted upwards. At length, meeting a steady current of wind, it hasted away to the east, and soon was lost to the anxious gaze of the multitude.

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CHAP. XIX.

The opening year smiled upon the islands; unusual fertility in the one, and unwonted industry in the other, loaded the garners and warehouses of the Tsidonians with more than enough of wealth. The opulent, misliking the mansions they had first reared, prepared to erect for themselves statelier edifices. The humbler classes, impatient of every grudging usage, learned to spend and to enjoy in imitation of their superiors. And the senate, provident of possible reverses, at once enlarged its fiscal demands, and originated public works, on a scale of magnificence which tenfold more enhanced the resources of the state, by provoking the national pride and energy of the people, than diminished them by the actual amount of the cost.

The time had come round when the Chief, according to his custom, should be gay for a season with his agricultural people, and embrace the children of Asmel. Terror and sorrow had had their sway; and the heart of man, moulded at first for nothing less than perennial felicity,

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and hardly robbed, even by years of suffering, of its strong primeval instinct of happiness, springs up forcibly, on every short respite of calamity, from the depressions of care and grief. So it was on this occasion, that an unusual hilarity—of which those who had fallen in the pestilence ought not to have complained, could they have witnessed it—attended the annual festivities of the Tsidonians on the island of fruits.

All that could leave the city crossed the channel, to take their share of decent revelry—the presence of the Chief forbad any other. Seventy green hill tops, or open grassy spaces, were filled with as many encampments for the tribes of the people. In front of each the pavilion of the elder of the tribe reared its vestments of crimson, scarlet, yellow, or azure, high above the common level;—a cone finished the palace of curtains, at the basement of which a broad fringe of gold divided the upright sides from the sloping roof. Banners of gay silk, charged with proud devices, fluttered far from the summit. At the door of his tent, surrounded by his ministers, sat the Elder, during the first morning hour, hearing and adjudging every matter of doubt among his sons.

A plenteous banquet, crowned with music and dancing, gladdened every day, and each cool

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evening, the youths won praises and rewards by feats of strength or agility.

The allotted period of merriment and rest had nearly expired, and the entire people, collected from their several camps in front of the palace of Asmel, were provoking the almost satiated gust of pleasure by new diversions. Tsidon, resting his hand on the shoulder of the youngest son of Aia, and supporting his daughter, paced from group to group, and received salutations of a loyalty that had no reserve of suspicion or ill-will; and returned expressions of a paternal love that was sullied by no lurking purpose of personal aggrandizement.

His eye, on every public occasion, with the celerity of thought, perused every face among the crowds of his people, and penetrated the dispositions, the desires, the capacities of each. "The faces of his people," would he say, "are the book a king should read: — ruin to the ruler who is not learned to decipher the symbols of its various page!" Frequently, during this day of closing festivity, he had caught a look of disguised disquietude, little agreeing with the general jollity. The man whose countenance thus marked him among his fellows, though he wore the common dress of the festival, was evidently worn by months of privation, and his wasted limbs were

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mocked by the garb of pleasure. The Chief at length recognized the man as the commander of a galley, despatched three years before to the eastern isles; and he fixed upon him a look which intelligibly said—"I will hear your story."

It was the custom of the Chief, during his stay on the island of fruits, to wander alone, after sunset, upon a height, not far from the palace of his son; and there, beneath the stars, to drink new supplies of that calm greatness and wisdom that become a prince, and that are exhausted amid the hurries of government. His custom was known, and no one ever broke in upon the range of his midnight walk. But on this night, as he was about to descend the precipitous path towards the palace, he was met by one who, in a respectful whisper asked excuse for his intrusion: "Sire, my business must plead for my boldness."

"Speak freely," said Tsidon; "you are the care-worn man whose eye I have met once and again to-day.—When and how returned you from abroad? I have descried no sail on the sea these days past."

"I set my weary foot," replied the captain, "upon shore at this hour last night in a secluded creek. I had crossed the channel alone, in a fisher's boat. I repaired to the palace and saw the prince, who bid me mix to-day in the general

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festivities, disguised, as if, like others, I were gay; and instructed me to meet you here at night."

The Chief retraced his steps, followed by the captain, to the hill he had just left, and there required him to narrate his adventures.

"Son," said he, "be brief, perspicuous, and exact; nor stay for choice of phrases, nor ceremonies of address."

"Three years ago I sailed as commander of a vessel—one of five—to collect spices, silks, and diamonds, on the coasts of the eastern continent, and among the more distant isles frequented by our commerce. We had replenished our ships, and were returning, when, as is our custom, we ascended the great river (the Indus) to refit, and take in provisions for the homeward voyage. The people on both banks, as you know, are friendly to the Tsidonians. On the bright evening when we run our keels ashore upon the sands of an island which divides the mighty stream, all things seemed as they were wont. Spent with long toils, and confident of safety, we gave ourselves to thoughtless sleep. But the dawn of day showed us, on both banks of the river, troops of horsemen, strange in their attire. The island also was occupied by troops;—we were surrounded, our ships entered by greedy plunderers,

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ourselves bound and separated, and each delivered in charge to two horsemen, who led us a sad and painful journey far to the north, until we reached the encampment of an innumerable host. There we were separately questioned in presence of the Mighty Prince; — the splendours of his regal state belong not to my story.

"I knew well that though the constancy of two or three of my companions might support the wrench of torture, the fortitude of most would presently fail them, and that what the strong might resolutely conceal, the feeble would disclose. Concealment therefore was fruitless. I determined rather to use the simplicity of exact truth, and, in reply to every interrogation, gave such an answer as, while it could receive no consistent contradiction from my comrades, would tend to secure for us all the advantage which may result from an exact knowledge of the strength and resources of the Tsidonians.

"The mighty warrior, whose dreaded name we have long heard pronounced with trembling and paleness of face on every coast, has at length pushed his conquests east and south to the very borders of the sea. He proclaims it to be his purpose, to tread on the neck of every prince under the width of the skies. He waits for no pretext of quarrel; he proposes no terms; chal-

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lenges no submission; asks no friendship; but, as the lion breaks in upon the fold, haggling not at all with the shepherd for the price of the prey, so does the terrible Habaddon — called The Destroyer—rush upon every land, and glut himself on the spoil.

"After enduring six months of sad captivity, I beguiled, at length, the vigilance of my guards. Alas, their failure of duty cost them dear!—As I passed the bounds of the camp disguised, I saw them — oh, the piteous spectacle! — writhing on the stake—their third day of thirst and anguish!

"The mighty conqueror, not ignorant of the benefits of trade, still permits commerce to follow its wonted tracks; and, in fact, companies of merchants, unhurt, pursue their journeys athwart even the smoking plains of war. To one of these travelling bands, on its way from east to west, I joined myself; and to these men of peace, after a time, I made myself known; and they, familiar with all the articles of Tsidonian merchandise, and cordial haters of the Ravager, favoured my return towards the coast. By their aid I traversed the sandy deserts, and afterwards made my way singly across the mountains, reached at length an establishment of our people, from whom, however, I concealed what I report to you; and seizing a boat, by favour of a calm

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day, crossed the straits. I directed my course to this island, rather than to the city, that my return might not be noised among the people, or Rumour fill her clarion of dismay too soon."

The Chief, after directing the captain to hold himself secluded in the palace of Asmel, passed the night upon the hill-top; and with the promptness and serenity of a great and vigorous mind, which is roused, not enfeebled, by danger, thoroughly digested those plans of defence by which he hoped to save his people from the threatened extirpation.

The people returned to their homes and labours, and Tsidon, convoking the senate, declared the danger of which he had just gained intelligence, and listened to the advice of all. The spirit, the confidence, and the patriotism of the elders failed not to be kindled on the occasion; nevertheless, on the faces of not a few, the Chief read the dejection of a deep, unuttered fear, which took its rise from the parting prediction of their banished colleague. Men so grave, men who should leave superstition to the vulgar, would be far from confessing that they had hoarded in their memories the last words of Harushul; and yet there was not one who did not wish he could forget them.

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Even if the new preparations for defence had not proclaimed the ill tidings brought by the captain, it would have been impossible to keep them from the people; for every ship that returned from the east, confirmed and swelled the general alarm. All the coasts of the continent, far and near, rang with the reported determination of the conqueror of many nations—"To reap the islands of the Tsidonians with the sickle of destruction." Each day some new and appalling description of the forces gathering from the north and east, to pour the flood of war upon the Tsidonians, came in, and ran in an hour from the outer mole of the harbour, where first told, through every street, and house, and chamber, of crowded artisans, to the furthest skirts of the city. Thus, when the flood-tide of the equinoctial season, headed up and infuriated by a hurricane, driving ashore, surmounts the dyke that defends a cultivated level, each enormous wave that shakes the rampart, spreads a new inundation through the plain—gorging the gulleys—flashing broadly over the tilth, and creeping, with sedulous exactness, into every crevice, even to the foot of the rising grounds.

"Our ships are our strength," was the word incessantly repeated among the people from the

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mouth of their Chief. To enhance and extend this strength occupied all the cares of the senate, and all the labours of the people. The Tsidonian axe laid low the glories of extensive forest tracts on the opposite main; enormous pyramids of timber filled the arsenals; and the hammer of the ship-builder resounded night and day on every side. The patriotism of the opulent converted their palaces into armouries or workshops; and, as every level space was now filled, many a marbled court, destined only to revelry, displayed a rising galley, which, when completed, was to be conveyed by engines to the harbour, even though painted walls or chiseled columns might be overthrown by the means.

Every Tsidonian of robust form was diligently taught the use of arms. — Alas that the spirit cannot be trained to the constancy and courage needed in war, as readily as the limbs may be instructed to wield weapons or to execute measured movements!

Another year, filled with rumours and occupied with labours, had passed away;—once again the people had enjoyed, though with slackened hilarity, their accustomed rural festival, and had returned to the city, when, at noon of a calm and cloudless day, the beacon fires of the Tsidonian stations on the hills of the opposite continent

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were seen, in quick succession, to send up their slender columns of smoke, expanding aloft, like the palm, and telling to the islands the long-expected news, that the hour of danger drew on. The darkness of night showed a long undulating line of these glowing pillars, far as the eye could reach; and on the next day, galleys and boats were seen hurrying across the channel from all points, towards the island.

The same emphatic story was gathered from every crew:—"All the plains beyond the mountains are covered with the hosts of the Destroyer: we have descried from the mountain-tops the fires of his camp, many and widely extended as the stars of heaven."

Immediate invasion was not to be feared, for the enemy possessed, as yet, no fleet on the neighbouring shores. But Tsidon divined his purpose, and wondered not when, after the lapse of a month, the black clouds of a vast conflagration burst up from the western foot of the mountains. "Let us husband our ships," said he, "for the enemy has fired the forests whence only we might replace them."

The power and permanence of the wind had been well calculated by the invader. He had thoroughly kindled the pines on all the western face of the mountains; and trusting to the steady

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gales of heaven to carry on, without aid of man, the work of destruction, he had drawn back awhile from the region of spreading fire.

By night the conflagration was seen from the islands, slowly pushing on its steep front of fire from range to range of the mountains, and leaving a flickering illumination far in its rear. In every place where a river, in descending from the hills to the sea, brought with it a narrow band of fertility, there the contagious element ran down on both banks of the stream, even as far as the levels of the shore, where, rapidly catching the sear sedgy growth of the marshes, it flashed upon the very waves. By day nothing was discerned but a black and sullen cloud, high raised towards heaven, and covering all the continent. During forty days the work of devastation went on.

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CHAP. XX.

As one of the galleys of observation neared the shore, after the fire had almost subsided, the people on board descried, at some distance on the scorched sands, a human being, running with the speed of the hare over the levels, and from time to time looking back in dismay, as if he believed himself pursued. The master put six of his youths on shore; with difficulty they at length overtook the fugitive, who had entangled himself upon broken ground. As they drew near, he repeated a distracted cry—"Power of fire, hunt me not—hunt me not!"

Exhausted and fainting, he surrendered himself into the hand of his pursuers, and on being brought on board, was recognized as one of those who had followed the exiled Elder. Kindness, and the sight of his home and family, ere long restored him to composure, if not to perfect soundness of reason. The Chief received him under his immediate care, and while an inmate of the palace, he gave the following account of the events in which he had been concerned:

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"By the direction of our master, the galley in which he left the island conveyed us beyond the straits, and put us on shore at the foot of a lofty promontory, from the ridge of which a small clear stream descends upon the curling waves; and, seen afar from the sea, looks like a silver cord let down from the heights by some kind spirit of the mountains, to aid the shipwrecked mariner.

"Each of us bore a basket of bread, a brazen cup, a knife—the consecrated knife of our profession—a rod, and about his neck a wreathed chain, potent against many harms. Wrapped in our mantles, we traversed the rocks bare-footed, and bare-headed endured the power of the sun.

"By turns we took the honour of bearing our master in his litter; and as we went, he continually strengthened our souls, amid the toils and dangers of the way, by words of high consolation—lifting thought far above the ground where fear and pain are felt. Yes! gaily and full of hope we climbed the flinty sides of the mountain, and waded through sands, and plunged through torrents, and broke our path among entangled thickets, and laughed at the afflictive thorns that beset our road. What is the rending of the flesh—what hunger, thirst, and weariness to the spirit that exults in the fulness of its energy!

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"We had long climbed a difficult ascent, when we gained the skirts of a forest, large, deep, unbroken; the precincts of which had hitherto been profaned by no foot of man:—the huntsman had never there frightened echo with his horn, nor the woodman lifted there his presumptuous axe. Trees, the growth of ages, stood thick, and shut out every beam of day from above. The ground, concealed by no thickets or underwood, was covered every where with a deep, yielding bed of leaves,—the fallen harvest of many winters. Through this fresh and silent obscurity we held our course, still ascending, and directed by the finger of Harushul, whose wasted arm, outstretched as often as the path was doubtful, showed us our track, with the readiness of one who is pursuing a well-remembered road to a familiar home. We broke, at length, from the darkness of the forest, and in a moment looked upon a wild confusion of rocks and mountain summits, far towering above the flight of clouds. But to understand my after story, you must distinctly imagine the disposition of the region whereupon we had entered.—

"—Imagine then a long, irregular and narrow valley, bounded on both hands by steep mountains, upon the sides of which, to some height, the forest extends itself. Above the line of

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verdure, a naked ridge, broken into all fantastic forms, hides an upper valley, beyond which rise still loftier summits of the mountains; and these, clothed in perpetual snow, are just seen from beneath, catching the first beams of morning, and holding the last rays of evening, while all below is veiled in night.

From the very bottom of this sinuous valley, and near its centre, rises an insulated pile of rocks, the summit of which is not much inferior in elevation to the upper limit of the forests on either side. Towards the west, and looking down the ravine, are several level ledges, such as the mariner, accustomed to the narrow limits of the deck, where he beguiles the midnight watch by a walk of frequent meditative turns, would deem ample. On the eastern front, which looks up the valley, there is a spacious cavern, accessible by a difficult path. This natural mansion our master acknowledged as the home he had been seeking for his followers; and here, at length, our weary feet found rest.

"To speak of the doctrine which, in that hallowed and happy cavern of meditation, we received from the lips of our master, is not my purpose; nor, indeed, as I remember, is it lawful to do so in the island of Tsoor; and, were it lawful here, yet might not one who has bound

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himself by the most fearful of all oaths, reveal, in any place, what has been committed to his devoted ear. Nevertheless, let me speak what, without offence on the one part, or sacrilege on the other, I may discourse of.—Hear then gorgeous princes—occupants or guests of this gilded palace—ye who sleep on soft couches, beneath silken curtains, who recline beside sumptuous tables, and are served by troops of minions—hear me recommend the higher happiness and choicer luxuries of the anchoretic life! Yes, hear of poverty, stripped at once of care, of fear, of toil, and of servitude;—hear of fasting and hunger, without want;—hear of affliction, without sorrow or despondency;—hear of days and nights filled with the luxuries of an untired energy of soul! Hear of brotherhood, free from rivalries and strife;—hear of death, neither desired as a refuge from the miseries of life, nor dreaded as a plunge into an unknown abyss!

"Ah, that ye could credit the word of one who has made experiment of both modes, and believe, on his testimony, that the existence of man is far more burdened than solaced by the thousand accommodations of artificial life. Men, the men, I mean, of cities, crush their own happiness beneath the load of comforts they, with so much pain, accumulate, and in labouring to

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multiply means of pleasure, paralize the very gust of enjoyment. How bright is the morning sky! how life-giving is the mountain breeze to him who starts from a bed of leaves, without a care, without a wish, without a passion! The flood-tide of thought mantles high, nor ever ebbs, nor knows a wave of trouble. He lives, replete with life;—he exults as the creature of light, of air, of heaven; and holds communion with whatever on the fields of the universe is ethereal and eternal! — But I approach the limits of themes forbidden.

"Alas! how sad a change is it for one who, like me, has lapsed far from the bliss of the anchoretic life, down amid the sickening luxuries, pleasures, and pomps of a royal mansion! But I will pursue my story.

"The seasons had gone their round;—we had gazed upon the fair beauties of summer, and looked out also upon the wonders of enormous rain, upon the terrors of lightning, upon the amazement of the sudden hurricanes that take their sport among the mountains. During months in which the waters, winds, and fires of heaven contend in all their rage, we had held to our rocky chamber, and listened, without languor, to the discourses of our master.

"It was in the bright and fervent season, and

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in the midwatch of a starry night, that first, while sitting at the feet of Harushul, on a ledge of the western face of the rock, we discerned the sky, long after the last glories of the setting sun had failed, to glow with unusual crimson. The flickering splendour now flung itself high upon the fields of heaven — now sunk behind the mountains — and again flared sudden to the zenith. Each hour the banner of fire more and more unfurled itself. The morning showed us, on all the western sky, a dark substantial cloud, as if an orb, large as the round world, were nearing the mountains.

"A bright fervour, statelier and more intense, dispelled the darkness of the next night.—The western faces of the snowy summits were all pink as the rose, and the black and rugged rocks of the lower ranges stood revealed in lurid light.—So when the founder lets forth from the furnace a deluge of molten brass, to cast the gates of a city, all the dismal rafters and piers of his workshop glare in brightness, like the gilded carvings of a palace on a night of banqueting. The forests, though fresh in the verdure of early summer, looked as if reddened by autumn.

"On the third morning, the light of day was confined to a narrow skirt of the eastern sky; for above us, and to the north and south, the

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curtain of thick smoke hung over the mountains. The rising sun peered in upon the portentous scene for an hour, and then withdrew his beams from the valley, as if unwilling to behold the horrors it must soon exhibit. Bright sparks, like an upward shower of fiery snow, coursed from the west beneath the cloud of smoke. The air, before noon, became sultry beyond endurance; we retired to the depth of our cavern, coming forth only for a moment, from hour to hour, to observe the advance of the conflagration.

"During all the day, birds innumerable, small and great, came flocking, with weary wing, along the course of the valley. Customs of nature, and strong instincts, were forgotten;—the hawk and his prey, urged by the same hastening danger, flew side by side. Myriads of the lesser sort fell exhausted on the woods; the larger, as they soared above us, by the red reflection on the snowy plumage of their breasts and wings, showed us a sure promise of the coming fire. Multitudes alighted for awhile upon the summit of the rock, and screamed their fears above us, and again, with painful effort, rose aloft, well divining that they might not stay there and live.

"Beneath us, on both sides of the valley, in the depths of the forests, we heard the rustling and the rush of innumerable herds, and beasts

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of prey—wild kine, and goats, and deer—and the buffalo, and the elephant, and the lion, and the wild dog, and names more than I can tell, pressing and hurrying on through the woods. Such was the continuous noise, as when a mountain lake, emboldened by a deluge of rain, bursts its natural dykes, and breaks down over the pebbly side of a steep hill. Silenced by horror, they went on, except when the lion or the wild bull, entangled in the boughs of a fallen tree, sent forth a yell of despair, knowing himself, by the sure instinct of fear, to be doomed there to suffer the tortures of fire.

"The woods upon which the fire was coming, stretched far around us on every side; and had we attempted to escape, we must quickly have been overtaken by the fiercest of all deaths, in the very midst of the trees. The cool depth of our cavern might, perhaps, afford us shelter until the hottest of the blaze had gone by. We spake not to each other of fear:—we had renounced, with vows, all care of pain or death. Our master lay tranquilly on his couch;—more tranquil, more ecstatic than hitherto we had seen him. His discourse was not abundant; but at frequent intervals, raising his arm aloft, and outstretching his hand, he exclaimed—'The Mighty are on the road;—they hasten—they come.—Come, Prince

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of Fire!—Harushul, thy favourite minister, shall join the march of thy hosts, jocund as the youth that buckles on his harness in the dawn of battle.'

"An abrupt turn of the valley, and a lofty jutting rock at some distance towards the west, cut short our view of the approaching conflagration, and prevented our calculating its nearness. Night and day had now become blended, and we ceased to number the alternations of time. It might be on the fourth day that our ear first caught the roar of the coming destruction;—a roar continuous and always increasing, and in depth and loudness like that of a river which throws all its waters, at a leap, a thousand fathoms down. Ere long the sense was deafened by the swelling thunders of the mighty furnace, upon which the winds were playing.

"A sultry hurricane, fraught with flakes of fire, came driving up the ravine, and many of the tree-tops, already seared by the scorching air, sparkled and caught, and, before their destined time, broke forth in flame.

"But it was not long before a tongue of fire, stretching far through a fissure in the projecting rock by which our prospect was bounded, darted its forks, this way and that, upon the woods; and they burst out from end to end of the valley.—

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Fire — fire, on every side, raged fierce as the smelter's furnace!

"From the upper skirt of the flaming woods we saw buffaloes, elephants, bears, leaping out with desperate effort — climbing, with unnatural agility, the steep precipices — vaulting from rock to rock — and at length, exhausted by fruitless endeavours to gain the higher range, tumbling back, uttering horrid cries, into the fervent abyss. At a distance from us, on the right hand, such a distance as a strong arm might have reached with an arrow, we saw an enormous serpent, that probably had slept till then, buried in the bed of fallen leaves, but now suddenly wakened by the heat, dart up upon the stem of a lofty palm, and rearing its head far above the tuft, gaze around in distracted wonder. The flames were already crackling among the pendant leaves of the palm; the horrid monster, unwinding his coils, raised himself still higher aloft, and showed more of his gay chequers to the blaze; then, with the cautious intelligence of reason, he seemed to be measuring the distance between himself and our rock, as if minded to venture the chances of a spring across the fiery gulf that intervened; but deeming the attempt desperate, and as the heat of his position became every moment more intolerable, he turned deliberately towards the fiercest

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part of the fires around, and with a furious effort that snapped the tree from whence he parted, sought for himself the anguish of the briefest death he might.

"The rugged precipices which surmount the forests of the valley, and divide between the upper and the lower ranges of the mountains, are rich in shining veins of silver;—as the heat increased, we saw the molten wealth streaming adown the rocks in many a sportive rill; or dashing in spangles from ledge to ledge.

"From the third day of the burning, the higher summits of the mountains, on either hand, had been hidden from our view by the cloud of smoke; nor had we perceived the dissolution that had taken place of the vast fields of snow that covered them, by the fiery hurricane that so long had been driving over the region. The torrents that came down had at length filled the upper valleys, which now became cisterns, teeming with a mighty inundation. The first notice of what had happened was given us by the breaking up of a fountain in the very bosom of the fire; for the superincumbent waters had made their way through a fissure, and now, indignant of restraint, soared high in air—an ample fountain, that fell, with deafening noise, upon the surrounding blaze. Presently afterwards, from every cleft in the upper

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ridges, a thundering cataract rushed plunging down into the flaming valley. At some points a broad and shallow flood, flowing over an open space, while it extinguished the fire upon the ground, left the upper part of the trees still burning; and many an uprooted oak, flaming on one side, immersed on the other, was hurried down the ravine upon the torrent. At other points where the precipices were more steep and bold, the descending waters, arching far out from their place of exit, leaped over the abyss, and raged at once into the very heart of the conflagration. How fearful was the uproar of contention between the two mightiest powers of nature, struggling amain for mastery and life!

"A huge body of snow, loosened from the loftiest of the mountains, sprang, with a bound, upon the verge of the impending precipices, at a point higher up the valley than our rocky home. For a time it stayed and dammed the cataract upon the gulley of which it had alighted; but yielding ere long to the pressure of waters, broke away, bringing with it the rocks that had stopped its progress, and rolling down, rested in the very bottom of the valley, where it formed a dyke, behind which the waters descending from above, mantled high. Thus protected, the fires in front raged with renewed vehemence, until, partly by

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the power of the heat beneath, and partly by the weight of the inundation above, it suddenly gave way, and in an instant the accumulated flood rushed down the valley;—the pile of rocks on which we stood, shook and heaved, and we believed that the whole mass must have yielded to the impulse.

"While the elements were thus madly contesting for supremacy, we took refuge in the lowest recess of the cavern, nor came abroad until the uproar had died away. The spent cataracts still poured diminished streams down the dismantled sides of the hills, and quenched the fire whereever they reached it; but in not a few places projecting rocks had warded off the inundation, and there trunks of trees, stripped of leaf and branch, continued slowly to give their solid hearts to the force of fire, and sent tall columns of flame into the sky. Here and there a tree, defended by its position, at first from the fire, and afterwards from the flood, but at length accidentally kindled, stood amidst the blackness of the extinguished burning, brightly flaming forth its resins from every bough and spray.

"After another interval of three days, the fire was seen only gleaming from beneath heaps of fallen trees, or smouldering at the roots of naked trunks. Still a dense cloud of mingled smoke

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and steam hung over the valley, and it was long before the red disk of the sun, just visible through the vapours, taught us to distinguish day from night. We had counted twelve days, when a violent wind, coming up suddenly from the north, in an hour rolled the murky curtain from the skies, and restored to us the brightness of the summer's noon. But how changed was the aspect of nature! Nothing met the eye but the blackness of charred trunks, strewed confusedly upon pale beds of ashes!—and instead of the snowy summits which heretofore, by their tender rainbow hues, had divided the deep azure of the sky from the deep verdure of the woods, we now gazed upon sombre and graceless peaks, dark in the primeval colours which they bore in that remote age when first upreared, by central convulsions, from the abyss of night; and their many points and angles, so long protected by snow from every storm, now bristled against the heavens, like the steely array of war.

"We brought our master forth to behold the desolation.—

"'Jealous Power of Frost! hast thou then,' said he, 'so vanquished the Lord of Fire? But what less was declared by the ominous encounter which Harushul beheld on these mountains a year ago?—Yes, a year ago, Harushul, the man of

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favoured vision, had passed three days and nights, fasting and alone, upon the top of the rock. At the height of noon, on the fourth day, and in the clearness of heaven, and under the hottest beams of the sun, when the fervour of noon had scattered every mist, and driven afar every fleecy streak of the morning;—at that hour, wherein the shadows of fear have no place, then did the minister of the dread Prince see, near the highest of the snowy summits, now dismantled and black, the Power of Frost—decrepit giant! He stood propping his palsied limbs against the mountains, on this side and on that of the valley. Think not, my sons, that I tell you of phantoms through whose airy substance the moon and the stars look with undiminished beams, or of shadows that fling none on the solid earth:—such belong to fevered brains, and to vulgar superstition. The eye of Harushul is gifted to discern realities. The shadow of the Power of Frost stretched dark and sharp across the valley, and fell distinct on the top of the rock. He reared himself, and his cowled head hid the sun from me, and I shivered in the deathly shade. Once and again he cast a sad glance at the brightness of the summer sky, which had no warmth for him:—just so a tattered wretch, who shrinks in the wintry blast, peers in upon the comforts of a princely mansion. The

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Power of Frost quaked and shed quick tears, that fell clattering down the hill-side, like ponderous hailstones. He gathered his mantle around him—cursed the winds—shook the hoar-frost from his locks, and huddled himself together, as if to take sleep for a thousand years.

"'Then Harushul saw the Fervent Power—Lord of Fire—Dread Prince, whom he serves, coming fast up the valley from the west. His royal banner of scarlet was in his right hand; in his left he held a flaming scourge, wherewith he flogged the lazy winds. The legions of his furies, with burning eyes and flaring hair, followed in his course.

"'The Power of Fire knew not—for, alas! indiscretion is his fault—he knew not that his ancient foe was so near, and strode incautious beneath the high battlements of his adversary's royal citadel. The Power of Frost, wakened from his slumber by the flaring banner of the foe, looked down, and jeered his daring. Quickly he gathered from his shoulders his large and blanched mantle—hurled it abroad;—potent of deathly chills, it fell, and spread as a pall over the forests, from side to side of the valley. At the sight, a trembling of heart seized the Fervent Power; and as one wounded in battle, he staggered, fainting and dismayed, and hasted from the field of shame.

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"'Harushul must not linger where his master has met defeat. Away, my sons, away from this desolated valley!'

"We set out to descend from the rock we had so long called our home, and to seek another refuge. The path, every where obstructed by smouldering trunks of fallen trees, and rendered difficult by pits whence their roots had been uptorn, made our progress slow. Often were we turned aside by gulleys and torrent tracks, worn deep by the impetuous inundation that had come down from the mountains. None but desperate men could have effected their escape from dangers and obstructions so many.

"Already the frenzy of fear had seized my brain; and on a sudden I turned from the path, leaped a frightful precipice, and probably was deemed by my companions to have perished, for none pursued me. The perils or incidents that afterwards befel me have been utterly blotted from the page of memory. In what manner I made my way from the mountains to the sea side I know not; nor retain recollection of any event until I awoke, as from a long and terrible dream, in the home I had madly abandoned, and saw the children I had deserted gazing upon me in mournful terror."

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CHAP. XXI.

NURBAL, the commander who had returned from captivity, still remained a guest in the palace of Asmel; for as he had seen much more than any other Tsidonian of the power of the Destroyer, the Chief was unwilling that he should hold discourse, or be interrogated, in the city. Among the household of the Prince he affected a churlish reserve, and soon ceased to be questioned. But to the Prince and his family he fully related his adventures. Behind the palace, and at the spot where the converging hills formed an angle, there was a deep and shaded bower. The place commanded a view of the whole valley, down to the shore, and of the distant sea, and of the more distant continent. Rills, hidden in verdure, trickled down on either side. The pomegranate crept over the roof of the rustic structure: the cypress and the myrtle guarded the entrance: the rose and the jasmine gave out their odours at the door-way. Within, an excavation had been formed on the side of the hill. The dim chamber, paved with marble, and lined

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with shells, afforded the coolness of evening at noon.

Asmel and Aia reclined on a couch placed at the upper end of the grotto. They were attended by their three sons, of whom the eldest had just entered upon manhood. Their daughter sat at their feet:—she was fairer far, and some would say more lovely, than Tsidonian ladies;—a young reflection of her mother's prime. Nurbal sat before them.

"Prince!" said he, "one would think that your daughter were sister or cousin of the fair Hela—daughter of the mighty conqueror who is now the dreaded foe of the Tsidonians. Kings venture not to ask her in marriage. Her haughty father, haughtier than fits humanity, in high scorn of his fellows, has dedicated the spotless virtue of his daughter to the gods.

"Habaddon, called by those who stand in his presence, 'the Light of our life,' but by those who sit afar, 'the Destroyer,' holds his court in the centre of a plain, far, very far to the north, even beyond the mountains, which, stretching from sea to sea, divide between the realms of heat and of cold. There, in the midst of a city more extensive and populous than happy or magnificent, he rests; if indeed he rests at all, for he

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lives in his camp; and his camp, as if borne on the wings of the wind, to-day frightens the nations of the west, to-morrow those of the farthest east. To become his enemy one need not injure him: to be free, and to be happy, kindles, without fail, his implacable animosity. He endures not the thought that any but himself should hold a sceptre; and with a dire oath he has promised to his dogs that they shall lick royal blood in every land under heaven.

"The father of this dread potentate, it is said, long ago led a mutinous band from the standard of his sovereign. The rebels, not few in number, and desperate in fortune, moving towards the north and east, took possession of whatever they found that was good and fair, and quickly drew within their net people after people, and stretched their domination over one-third of the habitable earth! The son of the successful adventurer, inheriting not merely the temper and courage of his father, but the consolidated power that flows from long-established sovereignty, and from far-spread renown in war, accumulated the means of conquest; settled firmly the usages of government; built strong holds in strong places; and incessantly traversing his dominions, attended by devoted and veteran troops, held all nations in the bondage of abject fear and servile obedience.

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"I first saw Habaddon as he was returning from the conquest of a southern people. The troops into whose power we had fallen, had been detached from the main army to surprise our expected ships; and having, as you know, Prince, achieved their errand, were returning in all haste to join the host. We came up with the royal march as it was traversing a boundless desert of sand. The heat, especially as we had lately issued from a wooded highland, was insufferable; nor did the army, though just emerging from a still warmer climate, seem much less oppressed than ourselves by the fervour of the region. The march had been continued for many days with little rest; for the operations of the war had detained the conqueror so long in the south, that the commencement of the rains was looked for before the army could cross the mountains, or ford the impetuous rivers on the farther side of them.

"The feet both of men and horses sank deep in the sand; and the naves of the chariot wheels—chariots of iron—touched upon the surface. So light and movable were the sands of this desert, that every gust of wind which crossed the plain, removed instantly all vestiges of the march, and restored to the trackless wilderness the terrible beauty of its smooth and shining surface. Men and horses, camels and elephants, toiled on as if

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at the next step they must sink exhausted on the earth. Every eye glanced frequently and wistfully towards the blue line of mountains, skirting the plain on the north, and whither the host was tending.

"The veteran warriors, who often before had endured the heat and thirst and labour of the desert, sat their steeds with the brazen patience of statues; and with experienced caution avoided even the smallest unnecessary movement that might, to no purpose, deduct something from that fund of strength that must hold out during the long day:—they jested not with their comrades—returned the briefest answer a soldier's courtesy permits, to every question—handled the reins with a nice and wise husbandry of the spirits of the horse—and bore themselves in their seats with a tranquil buoyancy that diminished half the weight to the willing but afflicted animal. The younger men contended more against the heat, and felt more its power. Impatient of every inconvenience, and thoughtless of consequences, they threw open the tunic, slung the mantle on the arm, fretfully chided their horses for every fault, and disturbed the order of the march by curvetings which made no progress.

"The captives—alas! the fifty thousand captives, connected in long lines by cords, passing from neck to neck, were rather dragged over the

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toilsome sands, than freely walked. The cord which linked each set of three hundred was tied to a chariot; and on either hand of the line rode a spear-man, who, with gay and quiet promptitude, applied the sharpness of steel to the shoulders of every spent and stumbling wretch; trickling streams flowed from most, and the delicate were as much exhausted by the loss of blood, as by weariness. If any one of these unfortunate beings, lately nursed, perhaps, in the lap of indulgence, became absolutely incapable of advancing, the cord which connected him with the line was quickly severed, and he was left—shall I call him most unfortunate or happy?—to perish on the sands. With much more regret does the traveller abandon a garment he finds himself unable longer to carry, than did those exhibit who thus left multitudes of their fellow men to die of thirst and hunger! But the usages of war harden the heart of the common sort of men, not less than the most savage dispositions. Often, when relatives were parted—the one to die on the plain, the other to proceed, he who was left, fixed his last languid look upon a father, a son, a brother, and exclaimed—'Rejoice for me; weep for thyself!'

"In the order of march, first came ten thousand light-armed troops, bearing javelins, bows,

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or slings. Then twice that number of veterans, heavily armed, and cased in defences of brass. They carried large shields, rimmed and rayed with brass; and they bore heavy spears and long swords. Fifty thousand horsemen followed; these were deemed the main strength of the army; their attire was of raw hides, bound and faced with iron mail. Ample cloaks flowed far from their shoulders over the hind quarters of the horse; they were armed with long spears, hatchets, and daggers.

"The war chariot of Habaddon, drawn by twelve black horses abreast, moved midway in the body of horsemen. The trappings of the chariot-horses were of gold and crimson; each was led by a groom, whose brawny arm seemed to contend on equal terms with the proud strength of the steed he held. The reins of all the twelve, gathered in a knot, rested on the arm of the regal seat. This, which was of massy gold, bore itself aloft upon flowery volutes of silver. Hideous sculptures stared in advance of the throne, on both sides. Behind it, a shield of polished silver, six cubits in height and width, and set round with a solar radiance of wreathed bolts, reflected the dazzling light of day.

"The chariot, when we joined the host, wanted its royal occupant, who, according to his custom

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on a march, was riding hither and thither through the ranks, now exacting abject obeisance from his princes, and now jesting on terms of companionship with the lowest of the people that followed the army. The throne of the chariot, at the time when I first saw it, was filled by two pampered hunting leopards, upon which the despot lavished all his fondness; and which, as his representatives, received the homage of the generals whenever they approached or passed the chariot. A chain from each of the naves of the four wheels passed to the neck of a royal or noble captive, who, in soiled and tattered attire, and with dishevelled hair, and arms tightly bound behind him, laboured to conform his weary steps to the movements of the ponderous machine. If he stumbled or failed he was dragged in the dust till he could regain his footing, or be crushed beneath the wheels.

"A numerous band of the chief officers of Habaddon, oppressed beneath the weight of jewels, and splendid mantles, and silver staves of command, rode behind the chariot. Few of them showed the grace and gladsomeness which should belong to royal favourites: gloom, or silent revenge, sat on the faces of most; and one would have thought that nothing but their mutual hatreds held them in obedience to their sovereign.

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"A thousand chariots of iron took place next in the order of march: each was drawn by four horses; each contained six warriors, armed with javelins; and each, when on the field of battle, protruded long sickles from the naves of its wheels. Then followed a various and innumerable host, mounted and on foot, and scarcely, if at all subjected to military order, and very little distinguished from the rabble of attendants that brought up the rear.

"After ten times encamping on the plain, we reached, at length, the foot of the hills; and once more set foot on an unyielding surface. Slowly the host ascended the sunny side of the lofty range which divides the southern from the northern world. Already the floating cisterns of the sky, fraught with rain for many months, were clustering around all the summits of the mountains. On the twelfth day of our ascent we had attained so great an elevation as to touch upon the dark billowy roofing of clouds, which, tumbling and tossing against the lofty rampart they had reached, seemed to be gathering strength for surmounting it. As we advanced still upward, a thick obscurity and a drenching humidity hid us one from another, and prevented our knowing any thing of the way, save that we were passing along a ridge, with a depth unmeasured by the

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eye beneath us. Many of the captives who had sustained the heat of the desert, sunk under the wet and cold of the mountains, and found a sudden and easy death by being hurled into the abyss beneath.

"At length we emerged from the region of clouds, upon a wide table land, thinly covered with snow: the sky was brilliant, and the sun bore upon us, but in vain; for the piercing air, even at noon, penetrated the thickest garments. Here the host spread itself abroad in much disorder; and when we approached the northern verge of the mountains, a halt was made of more than a day to redress the ranks. How amazing, especially to a Tsidonian, was the scene from this elevation! Above us a brilliant sky; around us, far as the eye could reach, a rugged snowy plain, scattered with huge fragments of rock, the sides and under surfaces of which seemed absolutely black in contrast with the whiteness around them; and this plain spread with an innumerable host, bringing in contrast the sumptuousness of regal state, and the extremest wretchedness of captivity. In front, and just beneath our feet, stretched an interminable expanse of clouds—a sea of vapours, piled and congested into many a baseless heap, which, even while the eye was admiring its magnific form and stupendous height,

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fell sudden into the general chaos, and gave place to a new tossing of misty pride. To the right and to the left, far as the eye could reach, the higher summits of the range rose like islands of snow from out the cloudy sea, from which, indeed, they could scarcely be distinguished, except by their sharper lines, their stronger shadows, and their immobility. How sublime were such a scene, if man had not broken in upon it, with the long array of his crimes and miseries!

"Order had scarcely been restored, or preparations completed for descending the side of the mountain, when the failing day made it necessary to encamp once more in this shivering region. The sun went down in fiery redness, and his retreat from the upper skies was announced by a sudden and continued explosion of thunder in the midst of the clouds at our feet — sure indication of the commencement of the rains. Often, during the night, a fiery bolt, breaking up from the angry sulphurous surge, sped all across the cloudy plain; and in its flight through the thin and frosty air, threw a ghastly splendour upon the turmoil of distracted vapours through which, on the coming morning, the host was to make its way.

"Before the dawn, every thing was in movement; the trumpets of the army, mocking the

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thunder, announced the advance of the royal chariot: but just at this moment a score of horsemen, at full speed, dashed up from the clouds, and made direct to the spot where Habaddon, who had not yet left his litter, was stationed. The steeds of these riders weltered in foam; and from their mantles flowed copiously the rains through which they had passed. After a moment of hurried conference among the princes, the monarch sprung from his curtained carriage, and, with the alacrity of a young huntsman, mounted his horse. None of his princes rode with such daring and ease as he; none could keep pace with him; one would have thought that the horse and the rider had but a single heart and will; and that the prancing animal, fraught with a fiery life, might have spurned the solid earth, and plunged harmless and buoyant upon the cloudy field before it.

"Long before I first saw him, I had distinctly pictured in fancy the person of the merciless Destroyer; but how far had fancy erred from truth! I had been misled, partly by those surmises which it is so natural to indulge on the ground of the supposed correspondence between the qualities of the mind and the peculiarities of face and figure. And I had erred also, partly by presuming that the chief would be not unlike

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his people and his princes. But it was far otherwise. These bore a stronger resemblance to each other than is usual among men not actually of the same family; and certainly no style of the human face can be more revolting than that which distinguishes the race of which I am speaking; and when first I saw the men into whose hands we had fallen, I said—'No wonder that he who commands such men, is a destroyer of nations!' With little variation they all exhibit an irregular, impending forehead; small and obliquely placed eyes; high cheek-bones; a nose impatient of its inferior position on the face; enormous protrusive lips; and a chin broad and projecting: such is the countenance which you trace along the lines of Habaddon's armies; such, which you see surrounding his boards of revelry; such, which you meet every where in the streets of his city:—one expression belongs to his people—that of an uncurbed violence of every sensual and ferocious passion.

"But not such is Habaddon.—Imagine, Prince, the form and the graces of one who might, without hazard of contradiction, challenge descent from the gods; of one who might be thought to have been sent from heaven to earth to bless the nations by super-human beneficence and wisdom! His stature is gigantic; his proportions

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robust; he is open-chested and erect; the fine breadth of his shoulders sustains a well-shaped head, beautified by an abundance of brown and shining locks: perhaps to display these it is his custom to ride bare-headed. Who could detect a fault in the regularity of Habaddon's features? Grudging that so much excellence of form should belong to such cruelty, I diligently sought in his face the indications of the ferocity of his temper; but the clearness of his eye, the serenity of his brow, and the majestic roundness of the muscular parts, well accord with the idea of sovereign power, merited by goodness. If I could find a fault at all in this visage, it was that the mouth exhibited a frequent convulsive grin, displaying the teeth; and that the tongue often played between the lips, as if to lick from them some flavour of sweetness. — Our notions of human nature are very dark and confused, and gathered very slenderly from actual facts. It may be that the original cause which distinguishes a monster of cruelty from one upon whom the world doats, is but, in the conformation of the mind, as a hair's breadth.—Perhaps it is but a moat in the machine that makes the difference between such a prince as Habaddon, and such as Tsidon!

"The several chiefs dashed away across the

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plain towards their points of command. A new arrangement of the army was presently effected; all the efficient troops were brought upon the very verge of the mountain. The chariots of iron were so disposed as first to descend towards the plain, while the vast masses of inferior troops were sent back upon their route, nor permitted to move from their position until some hours after their more fortunate and more valued comrades had left the heights. The more precious part of the spoil was placed on the backs of elephants; and the more distinguished prisoners given in keeping to the charioteers. The Tsidonians were in this number. A descent as rapid as the rugged and declivitous road would permit, now commenced; yet order was preserved, and indeed enforced, by the infliction of instant death upon whomsoever broke from his place in the line of march. We entered the dark and stormy clouds, and having gained the lower atmosphere, came under the fall of a torrent of rain. No objects could be discerned beneath or on either hand, beyond the moving crowd of men, horses, and carriages; and it seemed as if the multitude in too eager haste, was about to plunge into an abyss of waters.

"On the approach of night, the army had reached an open space on the side of the moun-

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tain; and here military order gave way to impatience and confusion. Every one had divined the cause of the hurried movement that was taking place; and every one wished that his neighbour were ignorant of what himself well understood. To be among the first on the inundated plains beneath, was the ardent desire of all; of all but those whose miseries had robbed them of the wish to live. It was perceived among the division to which we belonged that Habaddon, with his favoured veterans, had already got far in advance; for we no longer heard the bugles of his troops. The belief that the prince was not near to enforce discipline, broke up all care to observe order; a sudden impulse of impatience ran from rank to rank; and almost at the same moment the confused multitude of horses and men took to their fullest speed.

"The darkness of the night was absolute.—A reckless and fatal selfishness lashed on the host: multitudes were almost instantly overthrown and crushed. Relieved by the wreck of so many, the residue pursued their way with less damage; yet perpetually the noise of the descent of the army was increased by chariots of iron dashing one upon another, and scattering their clangorous fragments afar. Horses, frantic with fear, broke from the ruins to which they were harnessed, and

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raged through the crowd, inflicting death at every step. At length, as day dawned, the space on which we were moving, narrowed; and every eye discerned the pass within which the scattered and innumerable host must be gorged.

"A rush towards the point of escape instantly ensued; and in a few moments the ravine was choked with a heap of men, animals, and carriages;—a heap from which few could extricate themselves, and which none could surmount. This interruption afforded space and life to those who had already cleared the strait. Almost the entire body of the veterans, most of the chariots, and the captives were thus preserved; while the great and worthless body of the army, with its myriad followers, remained to save themselves as they might.

"By the favour of daylight we set forwards to cross the inundated plains which intervened between the foot of the mountains and the capital city of Habaddon. The flood, rising each hour, bore heavily athwart our road. We held, however, to the causeway, and safely reached the brink of the principal current, which was to be passed by a bridge of boats. On the opposite bank, where perfect security was enjoyed, stood a crowd that had flocked from the city. We perceived that they were watching with breathless

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anxiety the heavings of the bridge, and the swellings of the torrent. The monarch, with the van of the army, had safely housed themselves in the city, the preceding day; where his return once more from the field of victory was hailed with a false shout of joy from the unhappy myriads of his people.

"Every moment the strained cordages by which the long float held to the banks, bulged in, with a deeper curve, down the current.—It bent like a bow of steel upon which a sturdy youth is ambitiously essaying the strength of his arm. The troops and carriages that urged their way too thickly over the bridge, depressed it so low that it was completely swept by the torrent; and to those who stood on the shore it seemed as if the host was trampling the very waves.

"During the whole of the day the doubtful float held itself entire; and it was not till midnight that a sudden and terrible cry of death, heard from the city walls, brought the long-expected tidings that it had burst, and given the thousands it sustained to the flood. The light of the morning showed a sad spectacle; for though the swollen stream flowed tranquilly on, nor exhibited any wreck of the death and desolation it had caused, yet the further bank of the river, and all the inundated plains, were seen to be

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crowded with wretches, who having at length extricated themselves from the mountains, had vainly hastened on—not to be saved; but to perish with cold and famine, even in sight of the city and their friends. Every hour, as the inundation rose upon the digits of the standard by which its height was measured, hundreds exhausted, or overborne, disappeared: some of the more robust returned to the mountains, where, after wandering a few days, they met a lingering death of hunger.

"— 'My veterans are safe,' exclaimed the Destroyer, 'my chariots of iron are preserved:— the chief of the captives are brought in:—Habaddon uses not to fret at the loss of men and horses which the kindly powers of nature will quickly replace to him.'

"And yet," continued Nurbal, "though Habaddon grieves not when myriads of his people perish, he grudges if the eye, even of a slave, or of a child, be closed, or prevented from gazing upon him and his gaudy car, as he passes in gloomy pomp through his city.—So true, prince, is the adage—'Bind but a riband across the eyes of the multitude, and you make an indigent wretch of the most arrogant despot.'

"The ceremony of passing the captives through the city was deferred till the season of bright

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skies; and before that time came round I had effected my escape. I learned, however, that the custom of Habaddon, on occasion of a new conquest, is to have the vanquished king laid prostrate on the earth, in the principal street of the city. He then sets his right foot, with no gentle tread, on the breast of the royal prisoner, and so stands while the train of captives are led singly past. Not seldom the labouring lungs have ceased to heave ere the slow pomp is finished.

"Or if a king has defended the homes and liberties of his people with extraordinary prowess, his fate is to be shut up in an iron cage, suspended by the way side, where he lingers out a mournful residue of days; exposed to the mockery, or, to a proud heart, worse, to the pity of the vulgar.

"The warlike qualities of Habaddon are graced by no generous sentiments. His ambition is a furious cupidity; his courage a phrenzied rage; his promptness is the spring of the tiger; his revenge is the fang of the serpent. — Such is the foe with whom, ere long, we must contend. Such the man who now, often, starts from his dreams exclaiming—'To the dust, Chief of the Tsidonians!'"

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CHAP. XXII.

"LOYALTY, discipline, and skill to use the beaked galley; and courage equal to our skill, shall save our homes from the wrongful invasion of the Destroyer."—

Thus spoke the Chief to his people. Unremitted diligence of preparation prevailed through the city.—Fleet was added to fleet, the arsenals were crowded with the materials of war; ramparts were heightened, new defences added to the island, and towers raised upon every eminence. In order that commerce might suffer as little as possible by the diversion of the labour of the people from the arts of peace, the opulent surrendered their trinkets, and the sumptuous decorations of their mansions. Beauty gave up her adornments, and pride its gems; and by this means the customary outfit of the merchant-vessels was completed; meanwhile the industrious added another hour of toil to the day.—"If at last," said the Chief, as he stood in the midst of

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the busy multitude, " if at last our liberties and our prosperity and our lives are to be rent from us, let no Tsidonian sharpen for himself the sadness of captivity, or the anguish of death, by the reproachful thought that, in the hour of conflict, he had withheld a luxury or an effort which, if afforded, might have turned the balance of war, and have saved his country. We will no doubt shed the last drop of our blood in defence of our families and homes; but let the payment of that last price be prevented, if it may, by timely self-denials, by labours, by wisdom, and by diligence."

The returning fleets brought the expected intelligence that every maritime people, far towards the east, had at length bowed to the will of Habaddon, and had reluctantly renounced all intercourse with the Tsidonians. Thus driven from their wonted ports, the fleets had extended their voyages, and found new customers on new shores; and had replenished their stores with spices, drugs, jewels, and silks, of no inferior quality, obtained on better terms. The Tsidonian commerce, therefore, though disadvantaged by longer and more perilous voyages, flourished not less than heretofore.

It had been ascertained, that the enemy was

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employing all the resources of his mighty dominion, in constructing numerous fleets upon the banks of the Indus; and that he was training his best troops to the novel warfare of the galley. Rumour declared, that a thousand vessels of enormous size were almost ready for the sea; and it was known on better authority than rumour, that armies, more than could be numbered, were centring from far, towards the destined point of war.

Thus encompassed with dangers, the Chief and his colleagues deemed it wise to seek the aid of a foreign force. It was first determined that, with this view, an embassy should be sent to Kahtan, sovereign of that part of Arabia of which the northern promontory is visible from the Tsidonian islands, and with whose people the Tsidonians had long been on terms of commercial friendship.

Gether solicited and received, on this occasion, the powers of an ambassador, and after an absence of six months returned, bringing assurances of the desired aid, not indeed from the prince of the neighbouring province, whose military strength was found to be much less than rumour had made it; but from the gallant Yarab, lord of the fertile and odoriferous mountains, which send delicious perfumes far on all the seas about the straits of the Arabian gulf. After announcing to the

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senate the result of his negotiations, Gether related, among his friends, the occurrences of his journey, in the following manner.

"Tell me, my friends, does the patriotism of which we talk so much, oblige every Tsidonian to think and to say that his people are not only the wisest and most virtuous, but the happiest of the human race? I hope not;—for how could I profess to deem the life of Yemenian princes not immensely preferable to that of Tsidonian senators? If, as I am willing to admit, existence among the Tsidonians is enriched and recommended by a thousand costly enjoyments, so is it heavily taxed by labour and by cares, as well as by those inevitable woes that belong every where to humanity. Our happiness, at the best, is but a balance in our favour, that remains after duly summing up and comparing both sides of our account (may I not in the island of Tsoor thus employ the language of trade?). We are rich, only to the net amount of our wealth. We are joyous, only so long as toil and woe can be kept at bay. We possess no fund of the unreal, on which to subsist when the vulgar commodities of life run low.—

—"But ah, how different! how much more to be desired is the existence of a noble Yemenian!

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He holds himself as remote as possible from the solid, sordid solicitudes of vulgar and physical life:—he lives—lives wittingly, and designedly, from day to day, from youth to age, amid bright illusions. Tell him that his bliss is imaginary, he grants it, and exults to know that his condition affords him a felicity which is so much the more perpetual and serene than that of other men, as it is more imaginative than theirs. To the Yemenian, even woes and sorrows, wants and sufferings, are sources of enjoyment; for he looks at misfortune and privation through a glass that lends them bright colours and a radiance of glory. Every ill, excepting always disgrace, and servile toil and want, is taught to smile or shine; and if the griefs of life are bright, how bright are its pleasures! How resplendent to the Yemenian is honour! how delicious is love! how fair the face of nature!

"But it is not within the melancholy walls of a city, not among crowds, not within sound of hammers and looms, that the felicity of the unreal world may be found:—the man who, on the path of business, and in the haunts of gainful care, courts imaginative bliss, must either fail in the monstrous attempt, or soon become a maniac. On the gentle bosom of nature, and nowhere else, may these fair joys be tasted!

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" Duty has brought me back from the region of shining illusions to the precincts of substantial and rugged anxieties:—but let me enjoy a brief hour of recollected happiness, while I describe to you the flowery path I have lately trodden. Believe me, my friends, our Tsidonian energy and ingenuity impel us to encumber existence with too many conditions. We make happiness far too dear; and so dear, that few can pay its price. Yes; man may be blessed at a much cheaper rate. Find only a genial climate—a soil abundant, both in fruits and pasturage, and establish there a wise and beneficent system of social order, and with these means it is an easy task to accumulate all the wealth that can truly promote happiness. Such is the country whence I have returned. How bright and serene are its skies! how mild and bland and gay its airs! how fresh its mountain-sides and lofty plains! how fragrant and luscious its valleys! how fraught is every shade with dreams of delight! how copious every rill and stream with the element of meditative pleasure!

" Ranges of mountains, not so much elevated as to afflict the valleys with wintry hurricanes, yet lofty enough to shed a temperate coolness through the land, intersect each other, and enclose many spacious plains and sequestered valleys. The sides of the hills spontaneously

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produce every fruit, and spice, and gum, and aromatic herb. Numerous flocks and herds find abundant sustenance on the level tracts; and especially the horse — the noblest of animals, there attains his highest perfection of form, and size, and activity, and courage; and seems, at the same time, from the gentleness of the climate, to inhale the docility of a child, and an intelligence almost human.

"It must be confessed, that in the delicious land of Yemen, nature, or rather, despotic custom, confers every favour upon one portion of the community, and grants to the other little more than bare justice can demand. And yet I believe that the servile class in the country of which I am speaking, is altogether as little burdened or afflicted as the labourers and servants in other lands, and, perhaps, actually enjoys more of the common goods of life than do the inferior sort of men among ourselves. But wherever, as in the land of Yemen, a broad and impassable line divides the community into two bodies, separated by a vast dissimilarity of condition, and where the interval is not filled up, as it is with us, by an insensible gradation of ranks, the whole positive difference between the one and the other sort of men, in the amount of enjoyment and liberty severally possessed by them, obtrudes

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itself upon the observation of a stranger, and suggests uneasy reflections, especially if he has been accustomed to think of his fellows as endowed with equal rights, not less than with equal faculties of enjoyment.

" The lot and relative condition of a Tsidonian is more conspicuously the result of his personal conduct and merits, than of any arbitrary and irreversible institution; we therefore learn to reconcile ourselves to the fact, that one citizen spends his life on a couch of indulgence, while another groans beneath a load of excessive toil. But if servitude and want on the one part, and abundance on the other, are patrimonies, never either incurred by fault or acquired by merit, one is tempted (perhaps inconsiderately) to attribute to the social polity a high injustice, and forget that even the most equitable system ends in a result substantially the same; for whether we make men poor and rich by birth or by merit, the wide dissimilarity of fortune will not the less exist.

" The fact is certain, that no benevolent ingenuity can avail to secure to all the very same amount of the means of enjoyment. Nature herself originates, in the very womb, too many differences of capacity and disposition to admit of any approach towards a real equality among men.

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Or if, by a violence of political justice—an outrageous equity, all men must have doled out to them the same quantum of good, such a distribution can be effected, permanently, in no other way, than by reducing all to one and the same condition of naked and houseless destitution.

"But if inequality of fortune be once admitted, no power of man, no agrarian laws, can long prevent it from running up and down the scale into extremes. The only question then that remains for us to decide is this — whether the extremes shall be blended to the eye (as among the Tsidonians) by a thousand intermediate shades; or whether, as with the Yemenians, those who might have filled a middle space, shall be divided, one part being lifted up to the height of privilege and indulgence, while the other is thrust down to the level of servitude and labour. Is it best, by an unalterable constitution of the social system, to remove one class from the range of every fear, and the other from that of every hope; or to leave the rich to be tormented with the dread of degradation, in order that we may give to the poor a hope, seldom realized, of possible elevation?

"I attempt not to decide problems of this sort; nor shall I declare myself the advocate of a system of polity like that of the Yemenians:—I

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love not thorny disputations; and turn rather to the description of such things as I have seen.

"The arrival of a Tsidonian embassy upon the coast had been announced at the royal camp, and a troop of noble horsemen despatched to conduct us towards the interior of the country. Thus escorted, we traversed plains, crossed mountains, and followed the windings of valleys, until we entered upon an elevated, undulating, tract of country, covered with rich grasses, but entirely bare of trees or shrubs. Numerous flocks of sheep speckled every slope, and many thousands of horses, left at liberty for their season of rest, coursed wantonly from height to height. A prospect very extensive no where opened upon us; for hill after hill, with its waving line of glossy verdure, shut us in on all sides.—So, when the sea, after a storm, rolls huge billows, the fisherman, as his little bark ascends each tumbling height, looks but in vain, for his port, even when near ashore.

"Suddenly turning the base of an abrupt elevation, we came in front of an extensive hill-side, which spread its unbroken surface as far to the right and left as the eye could distinctly reach. Upon the very ridge of this slope, and

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dark against the azure of the heavens, we discerned a long line of horsemen, moving down at full speed. In one and the same instant, every man of our escort uttered a loud joyous shout, repeating the words—'the prince! the prince!—the gallant Yarab!' In the next moment, all darted forwards, as on the wings of the wind, ascending the hill-side obliquely, so as to fall in with the rear of the cavalcade, when it should have nearly reached the valley, along which it was to proceed.

"Our Tsidonian company used their recent skill in horsemanship in the best manner they could; and if they exhibited embarrassment or fear, received courteous aid and encouragement free from mockery, from their Yemenian friends. On reaching the line, we fell into the place conceded to us; and the blended troop held on its way, without having for a moment slackened its pace, in effecting the new order.—A Yemenian on horseback, and at the gallop, seems not a whit less at ease than is a Tsidonian on his couch;—or, to use a more equitable comparison, let me say, a Tsidonian at the helm of his galley in a gale.

"We had not proceeded far in this manner, before three horsemen, gracefully, rather than gorgeously apparelled, breaking out from the

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line, approached us; and with that ease, spirit, and gay gravity which, in every land, distinguish men of high quality, presented to us the congratulations of their prince — 'the gallant Yarab—Son of Light, and Joy of his compeers,' on our safe and happy arrival in the land of Yemen. And then, without seeming to imagine that the rapid movement we were making might be less suited to our Tsidonian usages than to theirs, proposed that we should detach ourselves from the royal train, and accomplish the rest of our journey at our leisure. We yielded to this proposal without reluctance.

"The Yemenians of the royal train, at the time when we fell in with them, were returning with their prince to his summer pavilion, from a distant excursion: — their arms, accoutrements, and attire, were peculiarly simple and elegant, and abhorrent of gorgeous decoration. One would say that the wearer of such a dress, and the bearer of such arms, founded all his pretensions upon his proper qualities, his noble birth, and his unblemished reputation; and that he relied for safety in the hour of combat, altogether upon his skill, address, and valour; not upon his shield or corslet. Silence generally prevailed among the knights on the march; not indeed as if imposed by rule; but as if preferred by men

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who, because they would never speak in a manner unfitting their rank and reputation, spoke seldom. The commands of the prince, or of superior officers, were conveyed from one to another in a low voice, and received with a graceful bow and courteous smile.—A loyalty unstained, unquestioned, absolute, supplies the place, not merely of coercion, but of every symbol or semblance of force, as the means of government. A Yemenian knight would much rather bury twenty lance-heads in his bosom, than be thought to resist for a moment the will of his sovereign. The gallant Yarab, the companion of his knights, has often said that he would break his spear, and throw away his sword, and abdicate his power, if ever he found that three noble Yemenians were agreed in disliking his government.

"The Yemenians live always in tents or pavilions, which they remove from valley to valley, from hill to hill, as pleasure or war may direct. Yet a few forts, and a few houses of rest (erected for the accommodation of strangers) are met with, here and there among the hills. To one of these—an edifice of very simple form, we were led by our escort; and there we found every refreshment which the courtesy of the prince could provide. We left our place of rest after a few days, and proceeded, at an easy pace,

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towards the royal encampment. Our road descended along the course of a valley, shaded by fragrant and fruit-bearing trees, and made gay by a profusion of brilliant flowers. A sparkling stream, now breaking over steeps, now flowing broad upon the pebbly road, accompanied our progress throughout the journey, until, on the third day, we reached the grassy plain on which the prince had raised his pavilion.

"In this land of knights the horse is the almost inseparable companion of man. A noble Yemenian is rarely seen abroad walking. A groom, with several steeds in hand, harnessed, waits beside every tent; and if he wish but to pass half the width of the camp, the Yemenian mounts his horse, and darts off at a gallop. Two paces only are allowed to their horses by these riders;—an amble, or a gallop: every other is deemed servile and proper to purposes of labour. So much are the rider and the horse companions, that an impartation of qualities, from the reasoning to the unreasoning animal, seems to take place; and a high-bred, high-taught Yemenian steed, exhibits indications, not to be doubted, of every sentiment of honour and loyalty, of gentleness and of valour, which distinguishes his master.

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"On this occasion, and among my friends, I am not to relate the business of my mission. These matters have been elsewhere reported.—In the first instance the prince received me in his pavilion—a spacious tent, divided into apartments by curtains. The saloon of audience was furnished only with the simplest articles of accommodation, such as cushions (of Tsidonian workmanship) and low tables, sustaining silver drinking cups, fruits, wine, and meats.

"Yarab occupied a chair, hardly to be called a throne, at the upper end of the apartment: by his side sat his queen, and only wife. Her person and behaviour displayed the mingled dignity, spirit, and freedom — a freedom as devoid of boldness as of servile bashfulness—which are never found where polygamy prevails; for woman—such is the unalterable law of human nature, unless she holds in tranquil assurance, and without a participant, the heart and duty of the man she loves, attains not either the vigour of reason, or the consistency of virtue. Nor is man—I must affirm in spite of our Tsidonian usages—less a loser by the indulgence of capricious passions; — for besides that he foregoes the zest and the force which esteem imparts to faithful conjugal affection; he becomes, by his usurpations of the other sex, or by his lawless intrigues,

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the hated and dreaded enemy of every other man, and thus forfeits the benefits of friendship along with the sweets of love.

"But it is not enough with the Yemenians, that woman should be respected and esteemed, nor even loved;—she must be adored. Like every other source of enjoyment, and, indeed, much more than any other, she must be invested with imaginary charms, and raised far above the level of every vulgar sentiment. To her soft hand is intrusted the crown for which the warrior puts his life in jeopardy. Her approving smile is glory; her frown or contempt is torment worse than death. Her presence is the law and sanction of behaviour;—nothing uncourteous, nothing violent; no ebullition of angry passions, no levity that trespasses beyond the bounds of elegance, is allowed where she moves;—she lives and walks within her circle as the queen of goodness and honour. He who would not be for ever expelled from the precincts of love and purity, must approve himself as one not less gentle than bold, not less kind than impetuous, not less continent than brave.

"In early life—for an absolute freedom is indulged to the preferences of love—the young Yemenian selects among the fair, the fairest in his eye. Openly he declares his admiration and

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his passion; and if another have not already engaged the tender heart of the maid, he seldom fails in his suit; for the love and preference of a brave and blameless youth is not rashly to be slighted by her to whom so precious a gift is proffered. The choice of love is soon made; but the felicity of wedded life must be purchased and deserved by years of valorous service—of patience and of constancy. Meanwhile a free and frequent intercourse of fond friendship, protected from abuses by high sentiments of honour, and by sanctions, terrible to the licentious, cherishes esteem and affection between those who have vowed truth to each other. And the period of delay is a school-time of every virtue and of every grace that may invigorate affection. With ingenuous solicitude, the maiden strives so to enhance her lover's regard towards her, as may secure his heart during the long seasons of absence, in which he must see many fair, and some, perhaps, fairer than herself. But ah! how much better were it for the faithless youth to fall in war, than to survive, who rends a maiden's heart by indulging a capricious preference!

"Sentiments which among a sordid and trading people are ridiculed as puerile, factitious, or absurd, are, among the Yemenians, found to be strong as the strongest passions, and actually to

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curb them. The whole frame-work of the social system is bound together by notions (call them, if you please, artificial), which, so long as they prevail and are respected, prove themselves to possess a more sinewy force than in other countries, is at the command of awful statutes, with all their dread implements of vengeance. The robust and impetuous youth, whose sport it is to provoke the lion in his lair, kneels, trembling and abashed, at the broidered verge of the vest of beauty; proffers to her hand, in silence, a budding lily, and should it be graciously accepted, dares once more to breathe!

"Nay, my friends, do not so hastily jeer this folly, nor jeer mine in speaking of it seriously; or call it folly if you will, yet it challenges the merit of leading in its train at once the dignity, the purity, the proprieties, the elegance, and the energy and constancy of virtue! Know you not that worship creates the qualities it imputes, and conserves the virtues that it adores!

"Diversity of rank and office do indeed exist among the Yemenians; but no Yemenian, so long as he beseems himself fittingly, is accounted to be *personally* inferior to any other. The Prince, absolute as he is, mixes with his people on terms of a perfect social equality. And as he fears no breach of decorum on the part of his subjects,

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so he finds it needless to impose upon them, in his presence, any degree of that restraint which, wherever it is imposed, implies a want of sense, or of a nice perception of propriety among those who must sustain it. It were to treat men as children, not to leave them masters of their own demeanour; and as it is presumed that a noble Yemenian never, even in domestic privacy, or in the hour of convivial mirth, forgets the dignity of honour and of high rank, there can be no fear of his losing such self-recollection in the presence of his sovereign.

"Though his will be absolute and irresponsible, the sovereign lives among his subjects very much as a father among his sons; or (especially when he goes with them to the field) as their leader and companion in arms, and their competitor for the crown of honour, valour, and generosity. His power rests altogether on the theory of the force of ideal sentiments; and the maxims of his government consist of the canons of military virtue. It need hardly be said, that a social system of this kind is utterly abhorrent of all practices of gain, or the accumulation of wealth by barter: a single trading transaction between one Yemenian and another, would dissolve the airy fabric of knightly honour, as surely as the touch of a burning brand destroys the coruscations of frost.

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Laborious occupations, and the business of commerce, are carried on exclusively by the servile class. Neither implements of industry, nor money, ever defile the hands of a knight.

"Every noble Yemenian is a poet:—or, to speak more correctly, poetry is the soul of the community; and he fills up most completely the idea of the national character, upon whom nature has bestowed most of the powers of imagination, and of the faculty of poetic expression. To be eminent in lyric composition is the ambition of warriors and princes:—to have no gust for the pleasures of fancy, is a disgrace little less than that of cowardice. The bard is not, as in other countries, a meagre wanderer, earning his pittance of praise and bread, from house to house, or at the board of luxury, by ditties of adulation:—the Yemenian bard is one whom kind nature, in her fondest mood—not sour necessity and wit, has made such. Whether he upon whom the rich endowment falls be born a prince or private knight, he follows the high vocation, and becomes in his age, at once the darling of the nation, and their prophet, their teacher of morals, and the historian of their glorious deeds. Ah, rare fortune, to possess the mantle of genius in the very land of poetry!

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"Beside the faculty of verse, another, which the nice and frugal hand of nature is wont to bestow distinctively, very rarely on the same individual—I mean the faculty of fabulous or historic invention and narration, is held in high, though in secondary esteem among this people.—The prince scruples not to compete among his associates as a poet; but no Yemenian of rank, whatever endowment nature may have conferred upon him, will undertake to amuse his circle by the telling of a tale. Verse is deemed to descend directly from the skies:—it is a thing altogether celestial; it is the language of the beings who drive their shining cars nightly around the pole. But fabulous invention and narrative is altogether mundane; and moreover, inasmuch as it assumes the style of proper history, and of common testimony, *seems*, even though understood to be fictitious, to infringe upon those inviolable rules of truth which a Yemenian adheres to even at the cost of life. On this principle it is, that men of the servile class, highly gifted in this way, are admitted into the company of their masters, to amuse the soft evening hours of gaiety and repose. Two or three individuals of this sort are usually found in the households of the principal knights.

"On a moonlight evening the prince and his

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ladies—I mean his wife and his daughters, and their companions, with his Tsidonian guests, reclining upon a grassy mound, girt by odoriferous shrubs, listened to one of these narrators.—The modest man, with hands clasped and eyes downcast, sat in the midst; and needed to be kindly reminded of his past successes, ere he could gain confidence in his powers:—in a low and tremulous voice he thus began:—

"—— Conspicuous among his companions by the graces of his person, bold in the field, and skilful to manage the fiery steed, Nourbad shone still more in verse.—Rich and abundant in conception, various, mellifluous, vigorous in expression, he ravished every ear. To a fair one, not unworthy of a knight so distinguished—to Zea, he proffered his faith. Zea, kind and true, was yet wilful, and stern—too stern in purpose—too steadfast in her resolves. Often, when Nourbad returned from the field of war, praised by his prince, admired by his companions, and asked submissively for the bliss of wedded love, Zea, with faltering voice, and colour quick changing from the lily to the rose, replied—'Go once more where the spear is broken against the buckler:—go, and win another crown of valour to lay at the feet of Zea.' He went again, and yet again.

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"As one who rears choicest flowers returns, and finds that, in his absence, the rude sithe has levelled his favourite lily, so, on his last return from the field of strife, Nourbad found that his Zea had fallen in death.—He wept not, but throwing aside his armour, and his lance, girded himself in the mantle of sorrow, broke away from his companions, and roamed reckless over the mountains. Long he wandered from solitude to solitude; not indeed hating his fellows, but yet shunning them, lest they should rend his wounded heart by proffering consolations.

"Upon the bare mountain-top he sat watching the waning moon as she climbed the sky:—he watched her course till she reeled from the zenith; and then, just before the wings of the morning, edged with silver, had broke up from the east, he discerned upon her horn—small and distinct, like a cluster of little stars, a female form.—While eagerly he looked, it stepped from its height, as a queen descends from her throne; and, without increasing in bigness, glided down upon the silver beams, and approached within reach of the staff on which Nourbad leaned.

"Not taller than a handbreadth;—sparkling and shooting forth a filmy radiance, Nourbad beheld his Zea:—yes, the features were hers, and the mien was hers, and the glance of the eye,

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tender and proud, was hers. — The impatient lover sprang forwards to clasp the vision in his arms; — but the vision held back, aloft, beyond his touch; and yet gazed upon him, as often she had done, with a look of kindness concealed, and of obstinacy declared.—'Ah,' he cried, 'is it not indeed my Zea?'

"'Yes it is Zea; but she is lost, lost to Nourbad.—She dances gay in a circle far overhead of the troubled world! Yet even amidst the jocund stars, it pains her not to have fulfilled her vow:—and though she may not fulfil her vow, she would fain reward the faithful love of one who has been faithful more than many.—Ask then, Nourbad, what shall Zea do for the man whom once she loved, whom now she would solace!'

"'Oh—return to love him yet!—Oh, return to the green earth, and bless the days of the man who has been faithful more than many!'

"'That may not be:—ask more wisely.'

——"'Let then Zea lend her hand to the impatient Nourbad; and lift him to the circle where she dances gay, far overhead of the troubled world!'

"'Nor that:—ask again; ask more wisely.'

"'Let then Zea thus hold converse nightly with her faithful Nourbad!'

"'Nor that.—Zea holds converse now with

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high powers, bright and fair, in a circle far up from the troubled world:—ask yet again.'

"'Ah, no! if indeed Zea be lost to Nourbad; if she holds converse with high powers, and forgets the man whom once she loved—the man faithful more than many; then has his stricken heart no wish, no care: if Zea be not his, he desires no gift;—then has he no taste of pleasure or of woe:—come void—void night;—come black, shoreless forgetfulness;—come death!'

"'Nor will Zea leave Nourbad thus to despond; but confers upon him, unasked, the gift, a rare gift, she has purchased for him in the skies:—'

"She stretched forth her hand, as if to convey her gift to that of her lover; but quickly receded, exclaiming,

"'Alas! the fate of the too stubborn Zea! Still, unwilling must she flee from the touch of Nourbad.—Yet, oh come after me, come after me! my lover!'

"As she spoke she glided down the steep side of the hill, and went on ever, over bush, and brake, and torrent, while Nourbad, with fixed eye and outstretched arm, followed as she moved.

"Day broke, and the lover, unconscious of things around him, sunk weary on the earth, and slept:—he slept till the evening hour; and then starting up from his dreams, looked for his Zea;

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nor looked in vain, for just beyond his reach he beheld her, as at first, diminutive, and sparkling, and beaming, as a cluster of little stars. Again she receded as he pressed on. He travelled all the hours of another night; and at morning had drawn near to the haunts of man. A shepherd found him slumbering by the way side, and strove to arouse him; but the sleeper could not wake, and only drowsily said, 'I come, I come, my love; yet suffer your faithful Nourbad to rest here for an hour.' He was borne compassionately to the shepherd's cot; but again at eventide started up, and set out anew to pursue his Zea.

"Thus goes he still;—the wanderings of the man faithful more than many, are not ended, nor are soon to end. Nightly he presses on, over desert and field, round all the world.—Nine times has the way-faring lover been seen on his journey of fruitless desire, toiling and hastening from the western mountains to the deserts of the east. With fixed eye and outstretched arm, leaning wearily on his staff, does he come.—Ever he shuns the highways of men, and the crowded city; but in his season, once in a cycle of the moon, he may be met on a lone path, speeding over the heath, or adown the rugged mountain side. Or it happens that the huntsman finds him

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at noon, far in the wilderness, sleeping beneath the rays of the sun: and if questioned or disturbed, still he drowsily says, 'I come, I come, my love; yet leave your faithful Nourbad to rest here for an hour!'"

"I visited, in his seclusion," continued the Ambassador, "a venerable and noble Yemenian bard, and theologue, from whose honeyed lips four generations have received the maxims of national virtue—the principles of universal science—the history of their ancestors, as well as the sportive delights of the fitful lyre. He is served by numerous attendants, and in his mode of life displays a simple magnificence, fitting his rank and function.—A lovely daughter of the fourth generation, whom never he has seen, for long has the sight of things earthly left him, sustains his steps.—Though feeble, he stoops not beneath the burden of many years;—his silvery beard, flowing to his knees, rests as he walks on his vesture, and proves that age bows him not to the earth. His sightless eyes are upward turned with a steady gaze, as if his power of vision were but transferred from earth to heaven.

"He conversed with me on terms of free intercourse; and in his own style of sententious brevity he instructed me in the principles of national

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belief — those principles, in fact, which himself has taught.—

— " ' Light and purity,' said he, ' honour and wisdom dwell with eternal amity in a palace of ivory, on the summit of a crystal mountain, seven times higher than the visible heaven of stars.— Thither, by an irresistible attraction, tends whatever is generated on earth of kindred quality:— thither soar, as sparks from the blazing pile, the spirits of the pure, the true, the wise, and there are they perpetually blessed with the blessed.

— " ' Foul treason, sordid avarice, base lust and passion, and bloated intemperance, by a like inevitable propensity, hurry downwards;—ah! farther down than the birthplace of night; and there occupy an immeasurable cavern, hideous and formless, where evil aggravates evil, without check.

" ' This fair earth is a neutral ground, whereon opposing powers, from above and from beneath, meet in frequent strife: — hence storms and floods;—hence the rage of winds and waters;— and hence those flaming brands of the sky that, once in an age, scare the nations.

" ' Man, and all nature with him, suffers from these celestial contentions; just as the harmless peasants of a secluded valley sustain damage when reckless war takes its course through their cultivated fields.

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"'But notwithstanding such temporary desolations, the course of things in our green and gay world moves on well, under the happy guardianship of myriads of deputed powers, each having his appointed task and function; and each labouring, by night or day, (as his part may require) to fulfil his allotted labour.

"'Yes; the bard whose eye is dimmed to things material, sees, crowding the air, the immaterial powers!—hurrying they go, and urging their strenuous wings from heaven to earth; from east to west; from north to south; charged and burdened with the implements and matters of their several crafts. First in rank and stature—a giant immense, strides daily across the sky, bearing aloft in his brawny arms the flaming sun, which, at the evening hour, wearied and impatient of his load, he hurls into the affrighted sea!—

"'Have you never seen, Tsidonian, an armed host, advancing by favour of night towards a hostile fort? Have you not marked how the flickering light from the watch-tower has gleamed from each bright spear-head, and point of drawn sword, and buckle of brazen helmet and harness?—So think of the sparkling splendours of a starry sky! Yes, the warrior-princes of the higher sphere, nightly sitting in royal state, or moving in slow pomp around the pole, and cased in celes-

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tial steel, send down to the eyes of men a twinkling reflection of their martial garniture!—

"'Shall I descend from the greater to the less, and tell how, in the trim and fragrant garden, a thousand merry minions of the sun hasten up and down the green alleys? some—phial in hand, laden with scents, stop at each chosen opening bud of lily, rose, or jasmine; and from the point of a slender finger, distil among the crimped petals their drop of odour, wherewith to decoy the bee. Some—ministers of colour—palette in hand, replenished each morning from the skies, exhaust the devices of their freakish fancy in painting of young leaves. — Some, with more careful brow, are building stems, weaving fibres; or planning, under ground, the course of roots.

'"See, when all the forest is clothed in its new verdure, and all the work of spring-time is complete, a company of well-practised artificers, impatient of repose, hastens away to a rocky islet, far in the sea, and newly upheaved from the depths. There they spread atoms of kindly soil, in crannies safe from the wave: thence they raise moss and slender grass, and modest herbs; and slowly stretching the bounds of their culture, at length boldly rear lofty stems; raise the tall palm,

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and the plantain; and set thick between trees of gum and spice, to tempt the sail of the mariner of a future age.—How little know the men of earth, the men of earthly wisdom, who see nothing above or beneath but the visible! who confess nothing but the palpable! Are there any so truly wise as the sons of Yemen, who listen daily to the voice of the favoured bard, the teacher of his people?'

"Yes, my friends, I permit you to smile at what I so gravely relate; especially such of you as are members of our Tsidonian college of astronomy. But while you contemn the errors of the Yemenian bard, remember, for candour's sake, that if the Tsidonians must possess such a knowledge of the heavens as may aid them safely to guide their galleys across the pathless waters, and such a knowledge of the secrets of nature as may inform the methods of their art—the Yemenians, who are neither sailors nor artificers; who neither fetch silks from a distant shore, nor dye them when fetched; have need of a philosophy better suited to their notions and mode of life than ours could be. The chilling severity of scientific truth, if once admitted among an imaginative people, would quickly dissipate every element of their national existence, and wither their brilliant notions, and dissolve even their very

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polity. Should a body of our Yemenian allies actually visit our island, and remain among us, I hope our men of science will, with a kind abstemiousness, refrain from telling them any such meagre truths as that stars are suns, and the sun a radiant globe, the centre of revolving globes, the earth itself a globe;—and so forth. But I dread more still for them, their intercourse with our men of trade: how soon in the human heart is that lust of accumulation quickened which dispels, as by a touch, whatever is imaginative and generous!

"But I must return for a moment to the land of my mission. The Yemenian sovereigns have engaged in wars, and pursued distant conquests, much more from the love of danger and enterprize, and martial pomp, than from the mere cupidity of acquisition, or the gloomy love of power. They have, indeed, pushed their arms on every side, and have at length compelled every tribe of the Arabian continent to confess their supremacy. But when once submission is tendered, the benignant Yarab (and so his predecessors) rules the conquered tribes with a sway as mild and paternal as if they were his proper subjects;—he brings them within the same circle of honour and privilege, and calls the brave among them to his table. To have resisted his

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arms with noble and pertinacious valour, is to have won his friendship; and many of those who now attend his person, and are intrusted with the most important affairs, were lately his antagonists in the field of death. From the sword of the man who is now his prime minister, he received, when a youth, a wound which threatened his life! The royal quiver of Yarab holds no shaft of revenge;—and on his crimson banner floats, in letters of gold, his title—'YARAB, BROTHER OF ALL THE BRAVE!'

"War has now ceased, for all his neighbours have kissed the Yemenian sceptre. Nevertheless the Prince yearly leads his companions forth, far to the east and north; and by the toils and discipline, if not by the dangers of war, maintains among them the virtues of martial life.

"On the day when the Prince listened to the business of my embassy, he stood, spear in hand, at the door of his pavilion, surrounded by his officers, and a numerous train of knights, armed and habited like himself. The eye singled him out from the crowd of princes, not so much by his majestic form, as by this—that the frankness of his mien was not curbed, like those around him, by a sentiment of loyal awe. Such is the difference between the high-bred but bridled horse, that confesses the hand of his master, and

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the fiery steed that, free afield, paws the turf in the pride of his strength.

"A gay and graceful gravity is seldom violated among these warriors, even at the board of feasting. — The harsh noise of laughter, say they, affrights and offends the guardians of high-born men.—Mirth and jollity are the portions of the slave, when discharged for an hour from his task. A true Yemenian is at all times in the same mood of joyous, fearless serenity. — Merriment alternates with care, as does night with day, and he (I repeat the national maxims) who would be free from sordid solicitude, must live above the level of the region wherein jibes, and quirks, and fun, fly from side to side.

"But again I have wandered. — By a courteous smile, and slight movement of the hand, the Prince intimated that the proposal I had made had been listened to, and should be duly considered.

"On the fifth day, at sun-rise, I was summoned again to the entrance of the royal pavilion, and found there the same princely assemblage.— The first hour of day is appropriated by this people to the transaction of every weighty affair. Yarab thus addressed me:—

"'Tsidonian prince! yesterday at this hour, five thousand of my companions and sons, each

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true and brave, set out from my tent door to traverse the sands of the eastern desert, which, though sultry, they like better than the galleys you offer for their conveyance. They will take no hire from those whom their valour may defend against the wrongful invader;—for to take hire from a friend, especially from a friend in distress, we abhor not less than to take revenge of an enemy vanquished. But should we ever fall into peril greater than our own swords can avert, we will, in our turn, ask frankly such aid as you may be able to afford.

"'These are the terms of our alliance. Prince! if you like them not, a swift messenger shall soon overtake the troop that is gone forth, and bid them return to their tents!'"

Gether here ended his description of the Yemenians; and, after a pause, one of his friends thus spoke:—

"Truly the gallant Yarab must be deemed more generous than wise, who so readily consents to send five thousand of his sons among the sumptuous, sordid, science-loving Tsidonians! Alack, these simple knights, unblemished in honour, unshaken in the belief of things absurd,

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and each bound by a tender vow to some fair one at home!—Must they then sit at our voluptuous tables, quaff our goblets, converse with our dark beauties; and worse than all, inspect our wealth, and catch the contagion of our passion for gain! But the ambassador has already implied his fear for the issue:—ought we not, in good friendship to our allies, to hope that the entire body of those that shall visit us, may find a glorious death—all in a day, from the spears of Habaddon; —rather than live to lose their own virtue, or return to corrupt that of their countrymen?

"Yet shall I confess that my solicitude for the immaculate virtue of these gallant youths is, in some degree, abated, by certain shrewd suspicions which have beset me while listening to the glowing descriptions we have just heard? Our friend has visited, he says, the very land of poetry; and what Tsidonian does not know that Gether is himself a poet? Should we not then, though he be himself the most veracious of men, regard the whole of his narrative as a sweet idyl? Would he, I ask, have offered the same description of the Yemenians to the senate, if formally required to give evidence concerning this people in his place? I think not. Or would our Chief, who lacks no faculty necessary for perceiving whatever is great and beautiful in

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human nature, have brought home the same gay and shining description of the land of Yemen, and of its people?—

"I think not.—Pardon me, then, Prince of the embassy; and pardon me, my friends, if I ask liberty for a little cold Tsidonian scepticism in regard to the alleged perfections of our knightly allies!—I grant freely, that a small, secluded, and pastoral or agricultural people, favoured in climate, and removed from intercourse with other tribes, may long retain simplicity and purity of manners, especially if some enlightened patriarch or chief exercise among them, during a protracted life, the sway of love and peace.

"I grant also that, even among a people like the Yemenians, those factitious sentiments which are bred upon susceptible imaginations by the perils of war, the softnesses of love, and the beauties of nature, may exert a great and amazing force in repressing whatever is ferocious, unseemly, or sordid in human nature:—in other words, *imaginative* virtue may well avail to counteract whatever might shock or chill *imaginative* sentiments, or disperse the fond illusions of the fancy. But there are vices with which that fine faculty quarrels not; and these will take so much the more licence in proportion as other passions are curbed.

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"Before I admit the blameless goodness and gentleness of our allies, I shall demand to know, much more than the ambassador has reported, and much more than probably he was allowed to see, of the condition of the servile class in the delicious land of Yemen.—Ah, I suspect strongly, that could we bring a Yemenian slave and his family far from those happy valleys, and assure him that he should not be given up to his master, he would tell us a tale of another sort—and one more like to the common complexion of human affairs, than the eclogue which has just ravished our ears!

"It perplexes me much to comprehend how it can be, that princes so magnanimous, so just, and withal so gentle as the gallant Yarab, should permit themselves to inflict the miseries of war upon unoffending and brave neighbours, purely, forsooth, because the beautiful ideal of the Yemenian character (in which must be gracefully blended the military and the softer passions) could not otherwise be realized! Alas for mankind! if indeed there must be knightly heroes; and if these lofty personages must purchase the favour of their ladies by baubles, so costly as crowns of valour won on fields of carnage, and amid blazing cities!

"The tiger-like Habaddon has also formed *his*

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notion of royal greatness (a notion differing, it is true, from the Yemenian model), and to realize the conception costs the world half a million of souls yearly!—and perhaps, before another year revolves, may cost the Tsidonians their homes, and liberties, and lives!

"My good friends, with leave of the ambassador, let us ever hold to our Tsidonian common sense, and always continue to believe, that virtue and happiness—happiness, the fruit of virtue—consists in nothing else than in wishing well, and in doing well to our fellows."

Gether, with great good humour, smiled, and applauded the sentiments of his reprover.

END OF VOL. I.

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